

# Naturopathic Medicine and Cancer



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## Choosing your path when you have cancer

Cancer is a diagnosis that brings to light all that is best and all that is worst in yourself, your friends and family and the health care providers that you will meet along the way.



It is of utmost importance that you consider your options carefully, and make the choices that feel

right to you based on what you consider to be of the most importance. There is no one “cure” for cancer. To produce a diagnosable cancer, many things had to happen. Perhaps there is a family history of a type of cancer that is inheritable or perhaps there has been a poor diet, radiation exposure, or a difficult life problem. Regardless of the events that have led you to this place, your job is to do the work that needs to be done – physically, mentally and emotionally – to heal. And to heal may mean to recuperate fully, it may mean to have a remission, or it may mean to find peace before death.

Patients pursue alternative treatments for different reasons. Most use naturopathic methods as a complement to their current care with chemotherapy, radiation or surgery. This is a good approach to cancer care where there is evidence that the chemotherapy, radiation or surgery being suggested will be successful. Where the chance of the usual conventional treatment being successful are not good, natural medicine may still be supportive and

allow the conventional approach to be more successful. In order to determine what is best for you, you need to have a frank discussion with your oncologist about what the risks and benefits of each potential course of care. You should get more than one opinion. You should be aware of the other options that are available not only in Canada, but worldwide, and what their success rates are.

One of the basic principles of naturopathic physicians is “Docere”, or Doctor as Teacher. The word “doctor” is derived from the latin “docere” which literally means “to teach”. That is my job. To give you the information that you need to make your own healthcare decisions and to show you where to look for the information that I don’t have readily available. It is not my job to tell you what you should do. No-one can do that but you, because in the end your treatment will be your responsibility.

During your own research, you will likely have come across many different options for cancer treatment. If you haven’t done so already, I recommend getting a Ralph Moss report on your particular type of cancer and the treatments available for it. See [www.ralphmoss.com](http://www.ralphmoss.com) for this wonderful resource.

Naturopathic medicine offers many adjunct care options for cancer patients. The primary naturopathic therapies are:

Diet therapy or supervised fasting

Nutrient supplementation

Herbal therapies

Homeopathy

Anthroposophical remedies such as Iscador

Energy work and remedies

Mental field technique

In addition, we can refer you for:

Manual lymph drainage

Acupuncture and chinese herbs

CranioSacral therapy

Counseling

Art therapy

### **Seeking Naturopathic Adjunct Care for Cancer**

If you haven't already, you should seek the advice of an oncologist before pursuing other therapies. It will be to your advantage to have a supportive family physician also.

Naturopathic doctors are qualified to help you support your body's fight to eliminate cancer with natural therapies, but we are not oncologists, and in this province we do not have access to many of the resources you may need from within the provincial health care system, at least at present. You will be asked to sign a release to this effect.

### **Naturopathic appointments**

#### *First appointment*

Your first appointment will be to review your health history and the current history of your diagnosis of cancer. This appointment lasts one hour and forty five minutes. By the end of the visit we will have an outline of a plan for your care, but we will likely not get to discuss the details at length. I will direct you to further resources and reading material that will be of use to you, and make arrangements for a second appointment.

With this letter, you should have received my comprehensive intake form. The form is quite long and involved. It should be

returned ahead of time if possible.

Please arrange to have a copy of your medical records sent to our office or bring a copy with you. There is sometimes a fee for this service, but usually the hospital or clinic will allow you one copy of your records for no charge. I use this information in part to get a better sense of what has been done and what has not been done in your care. Lab results we can obtain fairly quickly and easily if you can let us know where and when you had the tests performed.

Your support system should be carefully chosen to empower you to follow your instinct about what to do. I recommend that on every visit with a healthcare provider that you bring a support person you trust to help you on your journey, including all naturopathic visits.

#### *Second Appointment*

Your second appointment will be to review our initial plan and start to discuss details of going about your plan.

We will make arrangements for your supplements as required. Typically I will supply or refer you to an appropriate pharmacy for those supplements which are available only to health professionals or if there is a supplement where quality is of special importance. You are always free to purchase your supplements from whomever you choose.

After you have enough information to begin, we will schedule follow-up visits as needed for particular therapies or to address issues along the way.

Looking forward to working with you,

Allissa Gaul N.D.

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