

Cancer: Choosing Appropriate Complementary Therapies

By Dr. Danny Jui, ND

Many people with cancer and their families are actively seeking credible information on natural therapies to complement standard conventional treatments. This process can be overwhelming and frustrating. It is important to work with a naturopathic physician who is able to explore the most relevant options and provide information on the appropriateness of these therapies in your situation. There are two equally important approaches to this process.

An Evidence-Informed Approach

Without bias, this approach cautiously examines the safety, effectiveness and strength of evidence of a particular therapy. The aim is to analyze current leading data collected from the experiences of many people who have gone through similar situations as you. Together with the evidence, you and your physician can come to an informed decision on what treatment would best suit you in your situation. However, while very valuable, collective evidence may sometimes be limited in addressing the specific needs of the unique person.

A Person-Centred Approach

This approach focuses on you. It respectfully explores alternatives while taking into account your personal preference and the ultimate informed decision you've made about your own care. This subjective approach honours individual autonomy which has been documented as one of the most intriguing and powerful characteristics of recovery and healing in many cancer survivors. Working with a team of health care professionals who value and foster this kind of humanistic environment is of utmost importance.

No matter where you are on your healing journey, these two synergistic approaches can be effectively integrated into your existing care. It starts by formulating the ideal team of health care professionals that you feel confident and comfortable working with. Once these resources are set up, do

not be afraid to utilize them; ask questions and consider each of the crucial areas that will ultimately inform your decision about a particular therapy – safety, effectiveness, quality and quantity of evidence, alternatives, preference and your intuitive gut feeling!

On your healing journey, I would like to share an insight from a patient going through cancer: "Listen to your own inner feelings along with professional advice and research. Look for a consensus of opinions. That's how I make my decisions. Medicine is not an exact science. I choose to work with health care professionals who will listen to the questions the patient has and, even better, who invite the patient to ask questions."

Dr. Danny Jui is a Naturopathic Physician with further training in Integrative Medicine and Complementary Cancer Care. Dr. Jui will be speaking with the Choices Dietitian at the Canadian Memorial Centre for Peace on preventing cancer naturally . For more information, please visit www.choicesmarket.com

