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In the “name” of Medicine

The word medicine comes from the Latin word, *ars medicina* – meaning the art of healing. Medicine is referred to as the art and science of healing, encompasses a range of healthcare practices evolved to maintain and restore health by the prevention and treatment of illness. The contemporary medical model is largely illness-based. A patient presents with symptoms, a diagnosis is made and a treatment prescribed. Lost in the “busy” of medicine there is often little to no consideration for the whole person. People are growing weary of being treated like “another number”. This along with the endless information easily accessible (accurate or not), rising healthcare costs, and a basic mistrust in the current healthcare system, people are investigating other healing modalities. In promotion of patient advocacy it is important to be informed about the “non-conventional” modalities available.

Alternative medicine generally refers to any healing practice that does not fall in the realm of conventional medicine. This may include Naturopathy, Chiropractic, herbalism, Traditional Chinese Medicine, Ayurveda, biofeedback, and hypnosis. To review a few, Naturopathy is a distinct system of primary care, defined by the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians as “An art, science, philosophy and practice of diagnosis, treatment and prevention of illness.” Chiropractic, is a healthcare discipline and profession that emphasizes diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mechanical disorders of the musculoskeletal system especially the spine. Holistic medicine is an approach to medical care that emphasizes the study of all aspects of a person’s health, including, psychological, social and economic influences on one’s health status. Complementary medicine refers to the use of an alternative modality in conjunction with mainstream techniques, often identified as CAM, Complementary and Alternative Medicine. Integrated or

Integrative medicine is the combination of orthodox and complementary medicine with an emphasis on prevention and lifestyle changes. It is “conventional medical care that incorporates strategies such as acupuncture, reiki and herbal remedies.” And then there is Functional Medicine. Functional medicine shifts the traditional disease-centered focus of medical practice to a more patient-centered approach. FM involves understanding the origins, prevention and treatment of complex disease by using an integrative, science-based healthcare approach.

What is the “right” medicine for you? There are many healthcare modalities each offering benefits. Effective communication is a key component to a successful relationship between patients and healthcare providers. It is well documented that patient-centered medical care encourages a comprehensive approach to wellness. It is absolutely imperative that patients are empowered to make health choices that are in their best interest. This is accomplished through education, involvement and mutual respect. It is an individual responsibility to protect our most vital asset - our health.