**4 Tips: Start Talking with Your Health Care Providers About Complementary Health Approaches**

When patients tell their providers about their use of complementary health practices, they can better stay in control and more effectively manage their health. When providers ask their patients, they can ensure that they are fully informed and can help patients make wise health care decisions.

Here are 4 tips to help you and your health care providers start talking:

1. **List the complementary health practices you use on your patient history form.**

When completing the patient history form, be sure to include everything you use—from acupuncture to zinc. It’s important to give health care providers a full picture of what you do to manage your health.

1. **At each visit, be sure to tell your providers about what complementary health approaches you are using.**

Don’t forget to include over-the-counter and prescription medicines, as well as dietary and herbal supplements. Make a list in advance and take it with you. Some complementary health approaches can have an effect on conventional medicine, so your provider needs to know.

1. **If you are considering a new complementary health practice, ask questions.**

Ask your health care providers about its safety, effectiveness, and possible interactions with medications (both prescription and nonprescription).

1. **Don’t wait for your providers to ask about any complementary health practice you are using.**

Be proactive. Start the conversation.

**SOURCE:** NIH: National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health

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1. What medications are you taking that could affect your balance?
2. How would “load-bearing” exercises help my bones?
3. Have you had your eyes and ears checked within the last year?
4. Is this safe for my joint replacement (knee, hip, etc…)
5. Is it safe?