

## Complementary and Alternative Medicine

### Policy

Except as described below, VCHCP does not cover alternative medicine treatments or interventions.

Though not an all-inclusive list, VCHCP does not cover the following alternative medicine interventions, because there is inadequate evidence in the peer-reviewed published medical literature of their effectiveness:

- **Diagnostic testing methods**
  - ❖ applied kinesiology (AK)
  - ❖ chemical hair analysis
  - ❖ Greek cancer cure test
  - ❖ Iridology
  - ❖ Live blood cell analysis
  - ❖ Micronutrient panel testing
  - ❖ Antioxidant function testing
  - ❖ Ream's testing
  - ❖ Cancell (Entelev)
  - ❖ Cat's claw
  - ❖ Cellular therapy
  - ❖ Coenzyme Q10
  - ❖ Coley's Toxin
  - ❖ Coriolus versicolor
  - ❖ Echinacea
  - ❖ Essiac
  - ❖ Fecal bacteriotherapy
  - ❖ Fish oil (omega-3 fatty acids)
  - ❖ Flower essences
  - ❖ Gerson therapy
  - ❖ Ginkgo biloba
  - ❖ Glucosamine
  - ❖ Hoxsey method
  - ❖ Hydrazin sulfate
  - ❖ Hydrogen peroxide, intravenous
  - ❖ Immunoaugmentive therapy
  - ❖ Kava
  - ❖ Kelley-Gonzales therapy
  - ❖ Laetrile
  - ❖ Lorenzo's oil
  - ❖ Megavitamin therapy
  - ❖ Milk thistle
  - ❖ Mistletoe
  - ❖ MTH-68
- **Whole medical systems**
  - ❖ Ayurveda
  - ❖ Homeopathy
  - ❖ Macrobiotics
  - ❖ Naprapathy
  - ❖ Naturopathy
  - ❖ Polarity therapy
- **Biologically based practices**
  - ❖ Actra-Rx
  - ❖ Antineoplastons
  - ❖ Apitherapy
  - ❖ Aromatherapy
  - ❖ Auto urine therapy
  - ❖ Bilberry
  - ❖ Black cohosh
  - ❖ Bovine cartilage products

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- ❖ Ozone therapy
- ❖ Revici's Guided  
Chemotherapy
- ❖ Saw palmetto
- ❖ 714-X
- ❖ Shark cartilage products
- ❖ St. John's wort
- ❖ Trichuris suis ova therapy
- ❖ Valerian
- ❖ yohimbe
- **Energy medicine**
  - ❖ Acupressure
  - ❖ Biofield therapeutics
  - ❖ Crystal healing
  - ❖ Cupping
  - ❖ Gemstone therapy
  - ❖ Magnet therapy
  - ❖ Meridian therapy
  - ❖ Millimeter wave therapy
  - ❖ Moxibustion therapy
  - ❖ Qigong longevity
  - ❖ Reiki
  - ❖ Therapeutic touch
- **Manipulative and body-based  
methods**
  - ❖ Alexander's technique
  - ❖ AMMA Therapy®
  - ❖ Colonic irrigation, lavage, and  
cleansing
  - ❖ Craniosacral therapy
  - ❖ Ear candling
- ❖ Feldenkrais therapy
- ❖ Inversion therapy
- ❖ Myotherapy
- ❖ Neural therapy
- ❖ Pfrimmer deep muscle  
therapy®
- ❖ Pilates
- ❖ Reflexology (zone therapy)
- ❖ Remedial massage
- ❖ Rolfing (structural integration)
- ❖ Trager® bodywork
- ❖ Tui Na
- ❖ Visceral massage
- **Mind-body medicine**
  - ❖ Art therapy
  - ❖ Biogenetics analysis
  - ❖ Chung Moo Doe therapy
  - ❖ Color therapy
  - ❖ Dance movement therapy
  - ❖ Equestrian therapy  
(hippotherapy)
  - ❖ Faith healing
  - ❖ Guided imagery interactive
  - ❖ Hellerwork
  - ❖ Humor therapy!
  - ❖ Hypnosis
  - ❖ Meditation/Transcendental  
Meditation (TM®)
  - ❖ Music therapy
  - ❖ Primal therapy
  - ❖ Psychodrama
  - ❖ Yoga

**ALPHABETICAL LISTING:**

Acupressure  
Alexander technique  
AMMA therapy  
Antineoplastons

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Apitherapy  
Applied kinesiology  
Aromatherapy  
Art therapy  
Auto urine therapy  
Biofeedback  
Biofield therapy  
CanCell (Entelev) cancer therapy  
Chelation Therapy\*  
Chung Moo Doe therapy  
Coley's toxin  
Colonic irrigation  
Craniosacral therapy  
Cupping  
Dance/Movement therapy  
Ear Candling  
Electrodiagnosis (EAV)  
Equestrian therapy  
Essiac  
Feldenkrais method of exercise therapy  
Flower essence  
Fresh cell therapy  
Gemstone therapy  
Gerson therapy  
Greek cancer cure  
Guided imagery  
Hellerwork  
Homeopathy  
Hoxsey method  
Humor therapy  
Hydrazine sulfate  
Immuno augmentative therapy  
Infratonic Qi Gong machine  
Inversion therapy  
Iridology  
Iscador  
Kelley/Gonzales therapy  
Laetrile  
Macrobiotic diet

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Meditation/transcendental meditation  
Megavitamin therapy  
Magnet therapy  
Moxibustion  
MTH-68 vaccine  
Music therapy  
Myotherapy  
Naturopathy  
Neural therapy  
Ozone therapy  
Pfrimmer deep muscle therapy  
Polarity therapy  
Qi Gong longevity exercises  
Reflexology (zone therapy)  
Reiki  
Remedial massage  
Revici's guided chemotherapy  
Rolfing (structural integration)  
714-X  
Shark cartilage products  
Therapeutic touch  
Trager approach  
Yoga

**NOTE:** Items may be added or deleted from this list according to current scientific knowledge. The list is not all-inclusive and requests for items not included will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

**Chiropractic and acupuncture:** When part of Plan coverage, chiropractic and acupuncture treatments, arranged by Member, may be offset by reimbursement to the member of a portion of the practitioner's fee incurred by the member in receiving such therapy. Reimbursements are limited to a maximum per visit and an aggregate maximum per plan year.

**\*NOTE:** Reimbursement forms are available only in hard copy and can be found and downloaded from the following website address:

<https://www.vchealthcareplan.org/members/programs/docs/countyemployees/reimbursementClaimForm.pdf>

Alternatively, the form can be opened and printed from the attachment below:

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## Background

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), also called unconventional, nonconventional, or non-traditional healthcare, is a group of diverse systems, practices and products that are not typically considered to be part of traditional Western medicine (i.e., conventional medicine). CAM assessments and therapies are proposed to reduce disease-based clinical symptoms and improve health and wellness. Complementary medicine may be used in conjunction with Western medicine, as opposed to alternative medicine which may be used in place of Western medicine. Integrative medicine, as defined by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM), combines conventional medical therapies and CAM therapies for which there is scientific evidence of safety and effectiveness. Various CAM therapies are supported by some degree of scientific evidence, but for most CAM therapies key questions regarding the safety and efficacy of these therapies for specific conditions are yet to be answered through well-designed scientific studies (NCCAM, 2010).

Classifications of CAM practices include the following:

- **Whole Medical Systems:** Whole medical systems are built upon complete systems of theory and practice. Often, these systems have evolved apart from, and earlier than, the conventional medical approach used in the United States.
- **Biologically Based Practices:** Biologically based practices in CAM use substances found in nature including herbs, foods, and vitamins. Examples of these substances include dietary supplements, herbal products, and other natural products that have not been scientifically proven (e.g., using shark cartilage to treat cancer).
- **Energy Medicine:** Energy medicine involves the use of energy fields and consist of two types of therapies:
  - Biofield therapies are intended to affect energy fields that purportedly surround and penetrate the human body. The existence of such fields has not yet been scientifically proven. Some forms of energy therapy are proposed to manipulate biofields by applying pressure, heat or body manipulation.

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- Bioelectromagnetic-based therapies involve the unconventional use of electromagnetic fields, such as pulsed fields, magnetic fields, or alternating current or direct current fields.
- **Manipulative and Body-Based Methods:** Manipulative and body-based methods are based on manipulation and/or movement of one or more parts of the body.
- **Mind-Body Medicine:** Mind-body medicine uses a variety of techniques designed to enhance the mind's capacity to affect bodily function and symptoms.

### U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

- The Federal Food and Drug Act of 1906, The Wiley Act, empowers the FDA Center for Food Safety and Nutrition to remove unsafe food substances and botanicals from the market, and gives the FDA regulatory oversight for substances added to food, including monitoring safe use. The FDA maintains that a drug is any substance or mixture of substances intended for the cure, mitigation, diagnosis or prevention of disease (FDA, 2009).
- Dietary supplements are regulated differently than prescription and over-the-counter drug products. Manufacturers of dietary supplements are responsible for ensuring that their products are safe. While the FDA monitors adverse effects after dietary supplement products are on the market, newly marketed dietary supplements are not subject to premarket approval or a specific post-market surveillance period. Per the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994 (DSHEA), the burden of proof rests on the FDA to show that a product is unsafe. Manufacturers are not required to submit substantiation of benefit data to the FDA. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is charged with accurate marketing and advertising claims (FDA, 2009).
- According to the FDA, dietary supplements in today's market include one or a combination of: vitamins, minerals, herbals, botanicals, amino acids, any dietary substance used to supplement the diet by increasing total dietary intake, and a concentrate, metabolite, constituent or extract. The FDA states that, while some supplements may help ensure that the individual consumes adequate amounts of essential nutrients needed for optimal health and performance, dietary supplements cannot be promoted as a treatment or a cure (FDA, 2009).
- In December 2006, the FDA issued a draft guidance document for the regulation of CAM products. The draft was issued because increased use of CAM in the United States has caused confusion regarding which products are subject to regulation under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (Act) or the Public Health Service Act (PHS Act) and because

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the number of CAM products being imported into the United States has increased. The document provides guidance as to when a CAM product is subject to the Act or the PHS Act. The FDA cites the NCCAM's definition and categories of CAM in the draft. According to the new guidance, if the labeling of a dietary supplement includes the term "to treat," that supplement will be regulated as a drug under the Act. Biological products (e.g., virus, therapeutic serum, toxin, antitoxin, vaccine) will be regulated under the PHS Act (FDA, 2009; FDA, 2007).

The efficacy of various alternative medicine regimens ranges from extremely effective to ineffective or even harmful. VCHCP makes no statement regarding the medical necessity or effect of such alternative medicine interventions.

**Place of Service:** Inpatient or outpatient

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