



## The Association of Minimally Invasive Gynecologic Surgeons

...dedicated to safe, state-of-the-art surgery and health life-styles for women of all ages

### Complementary & Alternative Methods

Complementary and alternative therapies are a diverse group of health care practices, systems, and products that are not part of usual medical treatment. They may include products such as vitamins, herbs, or dietary supplements, or procedures such as acupuncture, massage, and a host of other types of treatment. There is a great deal of interest today in complementary and alternative treatments for cancer. Many are now being studied to find out if they are truly helpful to people with cancer.

You may hear about different treatments from family, friends, and others, which may be offered as a way to treat your cancer or to help you feel better. Some of these treatments are harmless in certain situations, while others have been shown to cause harm. Most of them are of unproven benefit.

The American Cancer Society defines *complementary* medicine or methods as those that are used along with your regular medical care. If these treatments are carefully managed, they may add to your comfort and well-being. *Alternative* medicines are defined as those that are used instead of your regular medical care. Some of them have been proven not to be useful or even to be harmful, but are still promoted as “cures.” If you choose to use these alternatives, they may reduce your chance of fighting your cancer by delaying, replacing, or interfering with regular cancer treatment.

Before changing your treatment or adding any of these methods, discuss this openly with your doctor or nurse. Some methods can be safely used along with standard medical treatment. Others, however, can interfere with standard treatment or cause serious side effects. That is why it's important to talk with your doctor.