

Alternative Approaches to the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Rheumatoid Arthritis

Alternative Approaches to the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Rheumatoid Arthritis

A holistic approach is called for in Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA), and several alternative therapies are effective for reducing the symptoms. People have also found success with acupuncture, chiropractic, homeopathy, hydrotherapy, herbal medicine, and dietary therapies.

Question:

What alternative approaches to the treatment and rehabilitation of rheumatoid arthritis are you aware of?

Answer:

A holistic approach is called for in RA, and several alternative therapies are effective for reducing the symptoms. People have also found success with acupuncture, chiropractic, homeopathy, hydrotherapy, herbal medicine, and dietary therapies. Also, since this is an autoimmune disease, stress reduction and relaxation training are helpful for calming and balancing the immune system and have been shown to reduce symptoms. Detoxification and support of the digestive system are important because poor digestion leads to an accumulation of undigested materials leaking through the gut and into the bloodstream, which may be a contributing factor in the development of RA. These materials may be deposited in the joints causing an inflammatory reaction. Detoxification and a cleansing diet which restores colon health are recommended, as well as the continuation of a healthy, whole foods diet. Foods rich in essential fatty acids, such as cold water fish, have anti-inflammatory characteristics.

There are many possible combinations of herbal medicine for RA. One herbal combination that works for many sufferers is a mixture of tinctures of meadowsweet, willow bark, black cohosh, prickly ash, celery seed, nettle,

wild yam, valerian, all in equal parts, with one spoonful taken three times a day.

However, in most cases, it is best for treatment to be highly individualized as each patient is unique. For example, while there are many anti-rheumatic and anti-inflammatory herbs, your unique characteristics and symptom picture would determine what would be best for you, and for this you should seek the advice of a practitioner trained in herbal medicine.

Recommended reading: *Arthritis Relief at Your Fingertips* , by Michael Reed Gach (Warner, 1989).

Copyright © 1999 WebMD, Inc. All rights reserved.