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## Naturopathy

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### Summary

- Naturopathy is a holistic approach to wellness.
  - The underlying principles of naturopathy are the importance of a healthy diet, clean fresh water, sunlight, exercise and stress management.
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Naturopathy takes a holistic approach to wellness. Naturopathy supports a person to live a healthy lifestyle. The foundations of naturopathy are based on the importance of a healthy diet, clean fresh water, sunlight, exercise and stress management.

Naturopathy aims to educate the person to look after their own health and the health of their family, minimising symptoms of any illness, supporting the body's capacity to heal, and balancing the body so that illness is less likely to occur in the future.

A range of therapies are used to support the person. Therapies may include nutritional medicine, diet advice, herbal medicine, homeopathy, lifestyle advice, and tactile therapies, such as massage, acupressure or Bowen technique.

### Naturopath

A professional naturopath is someone who has completed, at a minimum, an Advanced Diploma in either Naturopathy or Health Science, is registered with a professional body and is insured appropriately. Usually, a naturopath will have completed a Bachelor-level qualification.

Most countries have professional associations for naturopaths. These associations will have a set of standards of practice and codes of ethics that naturopaths must abide by.

You may find a naturopath by contacting the various professional associations. Many of these have a directory of referred practitioners who meet the required criteria for professional practitioners.

### Assessment by a naturopath

A well-trained naturopath will ask you about your diet, lifestyle, family background and environment, as well as the history of any illnesses or complaints. After taking a detailed health history, the naturopath may use other techniques, such as:

- kinesiology
- iridology
- blood analysis
- stool and urine analysis
- hair analysis
- functional testing.

### Treatment by a naturopath

A naturopath employs a range of non-invasive techniques and these include (but are not limited to):

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- nutrition and dietary advice. A poor diet stops the body from functioning well and a build-up of toxins can lead to a range of illnesses. Whole, fresh and unprocessed foods are recommended
- herbal medicine – herbs can support the body
- homeopathy – homeopathic treatments are used to stimulate the body
- hydrotherapy (water therapy). For instance, the use of hot and cold compresses might be used for certain conditions to influence the flow of blood and body heat
- physical therapies – such as massage, Bowen, acupressure, bio-puncture or mechanotherapy
- kinesiology and integrated bio-dynamics (IBD)
- counselling techniques – emotional problems and stress can interfere with the healing process. Counselling techniques can include stress management strategies and life coaching.

### **Special considerations for naturopathy**

Naturopathy is not a treatment for specific illness or disease. Naturopathy is a complementary therapy in that it may be used alongside other medical and therapeutic techniques. Always be guided by your doctor or specialist before using naturopathy for any serious or chronic illness. Treat as suspect any practitioner who advises you to abandon your conventional medical treatment.

Fasting is sometimes recommended. Make sure you are in the hands of a qualified and reputable naturopath and have consulted your doctor before you start a fast.

See also: **Complementary therapies, safety and legal issues.**

### **Where to get help**

- Australian Naturopathic Practitioners Association Tel. (03) 9811 9990 or 1800 422 885
- **Health Complaints Commissioner**

**This page has been produced in consultation with and approved by:**

Australian Naturopathic Practitioners Association

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