

A service for consumers from the [American Association of Naturopathic Physicians \(AANP\)](#) and the [Institute for Natural Medicine \(INM\)](#)



## HIGHLIGHTS

*To support breast cancer treatment and prevention naturopathic doctors:*

- *Boost and sustain the immune system and minimize inflammation after surgery*
- *Safely reduce side effects of radiotherapy, chemotherapy, and pharmaceutical drug therapies*
- *Support the patient through mental and emotional stresses*
- *Emphasize prevention measures in healthy patients motivated to reduce their cancer risk*
- *Develop post-treatment recommendations to reduce the risk of recurrence*

### FAQ #9:

#### **How does naturopathic medicine support breast cancer prevention and treatment?**

Emphasizing a holistic approach, naturopathic medicine offers complementary natural therapies to support and strengthen the body and mind before, during, and after conventional medical breast cancer treatment. Naturopathic medicine can help optimize tolerance to conventional treatments while also providing strategies to reinforce the body's natural defenses and recovery systems so that each individual is at their strongest capacity to fight the disease.

One out of eight women in the United States will develop breast cancer over the course of her lifetime, and while rare, breast cancer is also diagnosed in men. While conventional medical treatments such as surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, and pharmaceutical drug therapy are often essential components of breast cancer treatment, they can cause significant side-effects and can increase the risk of other health conditions. Additionally, battling breast cancer takes a tremendous mental and emotional toll on the patient.

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*When treating breast cancer patients, licensed naturopathic doctors develop personalized, whole-person treatment plans taking into consideration the stage and type of breast cancer that a person has, their physical and emotional constitution, lifestyle habits, and conventional therapies being received.*

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Specifically, naturopathic doctors help to:

- Boost and sustain the immune system and minimize inflammation after biopsy, lumpectomy, or mastectomy surgery<sup>1,2</sup> with the goal of shortening recovery times
- Safely reduce side effects of radiotherapy, chemotherapy, and pharmaceutical drug therapies, as well as provide natural synergists to these conventional treatments to enhance their efficacy<sup>3</sup>
- Support the patient through mental and emotional stresses that any cancer diagnosis and treatment brings<sup>4,5,6</sup>
- Emphasize prevention measures in healthy patients motivated to reduce their cancer risk<sup>7</sup>

*(continued)*



Naturopathic Medicine uses natural substances to restore & regenerate



## How does naturopathic medicine support breast cancer prevention and treatment? (cont.)

- Develop post-treatment recommendations to reduce the risk of recurrence<sup>8,9</sup>

Licensed naturopathic doctors are educated at four-year, post-graduate medical schools. While providing support to people diagnosed with cancer is within the purview of all naturopathic doctors, there are naturopathic doctors who specialize in naturopathic oncology. Naturopathic oncologists are board certified by the [American Board of Naturopathic Oncology](#) after completing a two-year residency or a minimum of five years in specialized naturopathic oncology practice. They are designated as Fellows of the American Board of Naturopathic Oncology (FABNO).

Working both in hospital oncology settings and in private practices, naturopathic doctors and naturopathic oncologists aid and collaborate closely with conventional oncology treatment teams. They understand both standard treatments employed by medical oncologists and how best to work in a collaborative model of cancer treatment that includes complementary and integrative therapies.

### Contact Us:

#### Institute for Natural Medicine

[naturemed.org](http://naturemed.org)



#### American Association of Naturopathic Physicians

[naturopathic.org](http://naturopathic.org)



While naturopathic medicine treatment plans are personalized to each patient after a comprehensive consultation, and adjusted as needed during and after treatment, prescribed therapies may include:

- Dietary and lifestyle modifications
- Botanical medicine
- Vitamins and supplements
- Psychological/emotional care
- Intravenous therapies
- Homeopathy
- Acupuncture

In addition to providing care to individuals diagnosed with breast cancer, naturopathic doctors can also help individuals at risk identify and implement strategies that can reduce their chances of developing breast cancer. These strategies include natural lifestyle modifications to diet, nutrition, sleep, and exercise, as well as stress reduction. Naturopathic doctors are trained to focus on these health-building areas in order to establish and restore optimal health.

*The AANP and the INM would like to acknowledge [Amy Rothenberg, ND](#) and [Heather Barrett, ND](#) for their contributions to the content of this FAQ. Some of the content for the FAQ appeared in articles by Dr. Rothenberg in the [Huffington Post](#) and by Dr. Barrett on her [blog](#).*

<sup>1</sup> Dirican A., Andacoglu O., Johnson R., McGuire K., Mager L., Soran A. The short-term effects of low-level laser therapy in the management of breast-cancer-related lymphedema. *Supportive Care in Cancer*. 2011; 19(5): 685-690. Available here: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00520-010-0888-8>

<sup>2</sup> National Cancer Institute. Lymphedema (PDQ)-Health Professional Version. Available here: [cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects/lymphedema/lymphedema-hp-pdq](http://cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects/lymphedema/lymphedema-hp-pdq)

<sup>3</sup> Vollbracht C., Schneider B., Leendert V., Weiss G., Auerbach L., Beuth J. Intravenous vitamin C administration improves quality of life in breast cancer patients during chemo-/radiotherapy and aftercare: results of a retrospective, multicentre, epidemiological cohort study in Germany. *In Vivo*. 2011; 25(6): 983-990.

<sup>4</sup> Mindfulness meditation for younger breast cancer survivors: a randomized controlled trial. *Cancer*. 2015; 121(8): 1231-40. Available here: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25537522>

<sup>5</sup> Garssen B, Boomsma MF, Meezenbroek Ede J, et al. Stress management training for breast cancer surgery patients. *Psychooncology*. 2013; 22: 572-580. Available here: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/pon.3034/full>

<sup>6</sup> Phillips KM, Antoni MH, Lechner SC, et al. Stress management intervention reduces serum cortisol and increases relaxation during treatment for nonmetastatic breast cancer. *Psychosom Med*. 2008; 70: 1044-1049. Available here: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18842742>

<sup>7</sup> Anand P. et. al. Cancer is a Preventable Disease that requires major lifestyle changes. *Pharmaceutical Research* 2008; 25: 9.

<sup>8</sup> Greenlee, Heather, et al. Antioxidant Supplement Use after Breast Cancer Diagnosis and Mortality in the Life After Cancer Epidemiology (LACE) Cohort. *Cancer*. 2011; 118(8): 2048-2058.

<sup>9</sup> Pierce, John P., et al. Greater Survival after Breast Cancer in Physically Active Women with High Vegetable-Fruit Intake Regardless of Obesity. *Journal of Clinical Oncology*. 2015. Available here: <https://arizona.pure.elsevier.com/en/publications/greater-survival-after-breast-cancer-in-physically-active-women-w>