

# What is Holistic Health?

Holistic health is an approach to health that is concerned with the body as a whole, as opposed to traditional health, which concentrates on illnesses and wellness in specific areas of the body. Subscribers to the holistic approach to health believe that maximum health is obtained when the mind, body and soul are all functioning in the best way possible and are in sync with the environment. The human body is composed of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. If any of these areas are not working to their full potential, it will affect all of the other areas.

The holistic concept of health and medicine has been around for centuries. Philosophers such as Socrates and Hippocrates spoke of how many factors contributed to a person's health. Similarly, ancient Chinese and Indian healing traditions followed the same mind, body and soul principles as holistic medicine. However, the word "holistic" was not regularly used until Western societies began to take interest in alternative medicine in the 1970s.

Holistic health is not a treatment, but instead, a lifestyle composed of multiple types of practices that promote the well-being of the mind, body and soul. Although a holistic approach may be taken with illnesses, which would be the practice of holistic medicine, holistic health practitioners are very concerned with preventive maintenance of a person's body. They wish to treat any possible symptoms, but are more concerned with the underlying cause of a health issue to prevent reoccurrence.

Types of therapies or treatments that are used to maximize holistic health are herbal medicine, homeopathy, naturopathic medicine, traditional Chinese medicine, Ayurvedic medicine, nutrition, chiropractic, stress reductions, psychotherapy and massage. In addition to therapy and treatment, another facet of holistic health is the choices an individual makes on a daily basis. People make choices that ultimately affect their personal well-being.

Some choices people make that can affect their holistic health negatively are deciding to use drugs, smoke cigarettes, consume large amounts of alcohol and engage in unprotected sexual activity. Sugar, caffeine, a bad attitude, high stress and poor self-esteem are also believed to have negative impacts on a person's health. Things that have a negative effect on a person's health open up that person to illness. Conversely, eating a nutritious diet, getting adequate rest, getting adequate exercise and avoiding sugar, caffeine, drugs, cigarettes, alcohol and unprotected sex is believed to maximize one's holistic health and to keep them free of illness.

