

USING TRADITIONAL HEALING WITH WESTERN MEDICINE

Traditional Healing



Focuses on all aspects of wellness

Heals the entire being and all parts of our health, including the physical, emotional, environmental, social, and spiritual.



Western Medicine



Focuses on body mechanisms

Heals the body of physical symptoms, ailments, and disease.

How They Work Together



Comfort Care & Long-Term Support

Traditional healing practices and medicines work alongside Western treatments to help reduce cancer symptoms and side effects. This helps manage the emotional impacts of a cancer diagnosis for the survivor, caregiver, and loved ones.



Whole Body Wellness

Traditional healing widens the Western view of wellness, taking into account all of the ways a person can achieve health beyond the physical determinants.



Personal Empowerment

Traditional healing balances the dependence on medication, technology, and medical providers with individual awareness, confidence, and shared-decision making tools.

Traditional healing sustained Native communities long before Western contact and the establishment of the scientific method. The knowledge and wisdom of traditional healers inspired Western medicine and gave rise to many of today's pharmaceuticals, including cancer treatments. Incorporating both practices in your cancer plan may be a powerful approach to healing.

According to the National Native American Cancer Survivors' Support Network, many Native cancer survivors take part in a spiritual healing or cleansing ceremony during or after cancer treatment as a way to stay connected to their culture. Provided below is a list of questions that both a provider or patient may ask when considering this approach.

Questions a provider may ask

- ▶ Are you seeking additional and/or alternative treatments for your cancer?
- ▶ How can I support you in your pursuit of traditional healing? How can we accommodate you?
- ▶ Will anyone be accompanying you to your appointments?
- ▶ If it is unsafe for you to partake in a traditional healing or cleansing ceremony can a loved one take your place, or can you take part in a ceremony at another time?
- ▶ Would your traditional healer be able to attend an appointment with you so that I can better understand and stay informed about this treatment?

Questions a patient may ask

- ▶ Can you work with my traditional/holistic healer?
- ▶ How can I practice traditional Native healing at this clinic/hospital? (e.g., burning sage or other traditional medicines, praying before/during/after treatment, singing with or without a hand drum)
- ▶ How can this therapy be complemented with my traditional/holistic healing?
- ▶ Can my traditional/holistic healer or relatives be present before, during, and/or after treatments?
- ▶ Can you work with my traditional / holistic healer about my cancer care plan?
- ▶ Can I call with questions about the impact of my traditional healing on my cancer care plan?