

## **What About Alternative Therapies?**

You may hear or read about many different kinds of treatments people have tried to cure their disease. A therapy is called complementary when it is used in addition to conventional treatments; it is often called alternative when it is used instead of conventional treatment. A number of medical centers are evaluating the scientific aspects of complementary and alternative therapies and developing studies to test them. Many of these treatments have not been thoroughly studied, and we have no proof that they work or that they are safe. Other treatments have been studied, and we know they don't help or are harmful. It is important to talk with your doctor or nurse if you are considering trying any of these treatments, because some therapies may interfere with your standard treatment or may be harmful when used with conventional treatment. He or she can talk to you about any research that has been done and whether or not the treatment is safe or would interfere with your treatment. NCI strongly urges you to follow a treatment program prescribed by a doctor who uses accepted and proven methods or treatments. People who depend upon unconventional treatments alone may lose valuable treatment time and reduce their chances of controlling their cancer and getting well.