

Most teens with juvenile arthritis use complementary medicine

March 14 2012, By Sharyn Alden



Seventy-two percent of adolescents with juvenile arthritis use at least one form of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), but only 45 percent have discussions about it with their health care providers.

That's the message from a new study that found that [health care providers](#) are often out of the loop when it comes to discussing complementary medicine with patients with juvenile [arthritis](#).

“We learned that lots of teenagers are using complementary or alternative health and they are interested in learning more about it,” said study author Elisabeth M. Seburg, of the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Minnesota. “It can be quite important that teens with arthritis and their [health care](#) providers have a good conversation about what is potentially helpful as well as potentially harmful for them.”

In the study, which appears in the February issue of the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, researchers analyzed data from 134 U.S. [adolescents](#) between the ages of 14 and 19 with juvenile arthritis. The teens were asked about their use of CAM and their health-related quality of life.

The most commonly used CAM practices were yoga and meditation or relaxation techniques, used by over 40 percent of the surveyed teens. Massage, herbal medicine and chiropractic were also used by the respondents but less often. Teenagers who reported low psychosocial quality of life were more likely to have used [complementary and alternative medicine](#).

Judith Smith, M.D. a rheumatologist and assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, said, “A number of my patients have asked about complementary and alternative medicine over the years. As a rheumatologist, I’m excited about the addition of yoga, massage, meditation and other relaxation techniques as well as some supplements, like 3-omega fatty acids found in fish oils, with some scientific benefit.”

“My final message about complementary and alternative medicine is ‘buyer beware,’” said Smith. “Just because it’s natural doesn’t mean it is good for you. With juvenile arthritis and complementary and alternative medicine, be careful—go to good sources and official websites like www.arthritis.org for information and evidence.”

Seburg adds, “Health care providers should routinely ask [teens](#) about their use of complementary and [alternative medicine](#). If providers aren’t asking about health promoting activities, whether they are considered complementary medicine or not, they are missing an opportunity.”

More information: Seburg, E. et al. (2012) “Complementary and Alternative Medicine Use Among Youth With Juvenile Arthritis: Are Youth Using CAM, but Not Talking About It?” *Journal of Adolescent Health*, [doi: 10.1016/j.jadhealth.2012.01.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadhealth.2012.01.003)

Provided by Health Behavior News Service

Citation: Most teens with juvenile arthritis use complementary medicine (2012, March 14)
retrieved 3 May 2024 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-03-teens-juvenile-arthritis-complementary-medicine.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--