

Dear Doctor,

More than **1/2 of all Canadians aged 20-44 are using some form of natural therapies**, (McFarland 2002, AJPH). What follows is information regarding collaborating with naturopathic doctors to provide integrative medicine.

Why collaborate with a Naturopathic Doctor (ND)?

1. Many **MDs are already working with NDs** in clinical medicine and in research.
2. Collaboration with NDs **reduces the risk of complications from interactions** between drugs and herbs or supplements.
3. Naturopathic doctors are **primary care providers** who use the following natural therapies in conjunction with conventional medicine or as natural alternatives:
 - Acupuncture
 - Herbal medicine
 - Nutritional medicine (e.g. dietary modifications, nutritional supplements)
 - Homeopathy
 - Mind-body medicine (e.g. guided imagery, meditation)
 - Physical therapies (e.g. hydrotherapy, joint manipulation)
4. Naturopathic doctors that are licensed in Ontario have achieved the following:
 - **Pre-medicine university training** in biology, biochemistry, chemistry, physics and psychology.
 - **4,100 hours of academic and clinical training** and a diploma from a four-year full-time accredited naturopathic medical college including one year clinical internship.
 - Successful completion of North American **licensing exams including basic sciences**, anatomy, biochemistry, microbiology, immunology, physiology and pathology), **as well as clinical sciences** (physical and clinical diagnosis, laboratory diagnosis and diagnostic imaging, pharmacology, emergency medicine, clinical nutrition, physical medicine, botanical medicine, psychology, traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture and homeopathy).
 - Successful completion of Ontario licensing exams including practical exams, (physical and clinical diagnosis, acupuncture and manipulation), as well as Ontario jurisprudence.
 - Successful completion of annual **continuing medical education** requirements.

When should I contact a Naturopathic Doctor or refer my patient to an ND?

1. When a patient is seeing **minimal improvement** from conventional treatment.
2. When a patient has **symptoms that cannot be explained** by a conventional diagnosis.
3. When a patient requires information and support for **improving their diet and lifestyle**.
4. When a patient expresses **interest in exploring complimentary or alternative medicine**.
5. When a patient is **combining medications with supplements or herbs**.

I frequently work with and refer to medical doctors in order to provide the **best possible integrated medical care**. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

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