# **Principles of Holistic Medicine**

**by Academy of Integrative Health & Medicine**

**Holistic medicine is the art and science of healing that addresses the whole person – body, mind, and spirit.** The practice of holistic medicine integrates conventional and alternative therapies to prevent and treat disease, and most importantly, to promote optimal health. This condition of holistic health is defined as the unlimited and unimpeded free flow of life force energy through body, mind, and spirit.

Holistic medicine encompasses all safe and appropriate modalities of diagnosis and treatment. It includes analysis of physical, nutritional, environmental, emotional, spiritual and lifestyle elements. Holistic medicine focuses upon patient education and participation in the healing process.

**The Principles of Holistic Medical Practice**

* Holistic physicians embrace a variety of safe, effective options in the diagnosis and treatment, including:a. education for lifestyle changes and self-careb. complementary alternatives; andc. conventional drugs and surgery
* Searching for the underlying causes of disease is preferable to treating symptoms alone.
* Holistic physicians expend as much effort in establishing what kind of patient has a disease as they do in establishing what kind of disease a patient has.
* Prevention is preferable to treatment and is usually more cost-effective. The most cost-effective approach evokes the patient’s own innate healing capabilities.
* Illness is viewed as a manifestation of a dysfunction of the whole person, not as an isolated event.
* A major determinant of healing outcomes is the quality of the relationship established between physician and patient, in which patient autonomy is encouraged.
* The ideal physician-patient relationship considers the needs, desires, awareness and insight of the patient as well as those of the physician.
* Physicians significantly influence patients by their example.
* Illness, pain, and the dying process can be learning opportunities for patients and physicians.
* Holistic physicians encourage patients to evoke the healing power of love, hope, humor and enthusiasm, and to release the toxic consequences of hostility, shame, greed, depression, and prolonged fear, anger, and grief.
* Unconditional love is life’s most powerful medicine. Physicians strive to adopt an attitude of unconditional love for patients, themselves, and other practitioners.
* Optimal health is much more than the absence of sickness. It is the conscious pursuit of the highest qualities of the physical, environmental, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social aspects of the human experience.

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The Academy of Integrative Health & Medicine (AIHM) unites the many voices in integrative health — from family doctors to psychologists, acupuncturists to nurses and every practitioner in between — to build bridges between professions and offer credible educational and certification programs for licensed healthcare providers. AIHM is a new organization created with the merging of the American Holistic Medical Association and the American Board of Integrative Holistic Medicine.