



Complimentary Therapy**

Complimentary therapy can sometimes be, and often is, confused with alternative therapies. Complimentary therapy is defined as treatment that supports or compliments mainstream medicine whereas alternative therapy is treatment that replaces mainstream medicine.

The use of complimentary therapy should be in addition to, not instead of, your usual antiepileptic medication (AED's). No-one should stop taking their normal medication without first discussing it with their doctor. This is particularly important with AED's as sudden withdrawal of the medication can be dangerous and detrimental to your health. If you find a complimentary therapy please discuss it with your doctor before commencing. Your doctor will have a good idea on what is safe and what is not and can help you determine whether you will benefit from commencing a complimentary therapy. Of course some complimentary therapies are quite safe such as massage to help relieve stress and anxiety. One complimentary therapy that I recommend to everybody is exercise**! Research has found that most people with epilepsy experience improved electroencephalograph (EEG) readings during and after exercise. Of course with exercise come some safety considerations.

Be guided by your doctor, but general safety suggestions include:

- Before starting any new exercise program, consult with your doctor or specialist.
- Make sure your sporting companions are aware of your condition, and know what to do if you have a seizure.
- Always wear a medical alert bracelet.

- Wear protective gear appropriate to your sport, such as helmet or knee pads.
- Always wear a life jacket when involved in water sports.
- **Activities such as contact sports, scuba diving, bungee jumping and boxing are dangerous and should be avoided.**
- Avoid solo aerial sports such as hang gliding and skydiving.
- Avoid high altitude activities such as mountain climbing.
- Let family/friends know your walking/jogging/exercise route before you leave and how long you will be out

(Adapted from Better Health Vic, 2005)

If you want to know more about complimentary therapies contact Mark at the Epilepsy Centre.

****** *always confer with your doctor before starting any physical activity program or complimentary therapy*

