

# the new medicine

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## WHERE YOU LIVE: Finding IM

You're curious about chiropractors. You want to research Reiki. You want to become proactive about your healthcare by adding new "whole-person" therapies that enhance your mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. In other words, you're interested in integrative medicine, or IM. Researchers are proving that IM's "whole person" approach to healthcare can have significant impact on health and healing, and every year, more practitioners are emerging. But where can you go to find out more about safe and effective integrative medicine options in your community?

### **Go to school.**

Begin by contacting medical schools near your home to ask if they have a program in IM, or visit [www.bravewell.org/links/acadcon.asp](http://www.bravewell.org/links/acadcon.asp) for a list of nationally recognized IM academic centers. If an IM program does exist in your area, call the program director's office to request a physician referral.

### **Go traditional.**

If you are seeking a particular treatment, such as acupuncture, meditation, or qigong, you can begin by consulting your local *Yellow pages* or online listings. Look under the name of the treatment and under more general terms like "clinics," "integrative medicine," "alternative medicine," "holistic medicine," etc. Some treatments, such as chiropractic and massage therapy, may have more established practitioners, while others may be scarce. *Important note: Checking listings is only a starting place. If you do choose this route, it is imperative that you follow up by researching the practitioners' qualifications and training.* You can research qualifications by simply asking the practitioner, or going online to your state's health department or sites such as Choice Trust ([www.choicetrust.com](http://www.choicetrust.com)). Word-of-mouth references are also useful when seeking information about a practitioner's strengths and challenges. Remember, it is perfectly acceptable to request these references directly from the practitioner.

### **Go online.**

The American Board of Holistic Medicine is beginning to certify doctors that practice holistic care. The Web site ([www.americanboardholisticmed.org](http://www.americanboardholisticmed.org)) lists the names and contact information of certified holistic doctors state by state. You may also visit the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine ([www.nccam.nih.gov/](http://www.nccam.nih.gov/)) and the Cochrane Collaboration Complementary Medicine Field ([www.compmed.umm.edu/Cochrane/index.html](http://www.compmed.umm.edu/Cochrane/index.html)). Both are good sources of high-quality information when researching the safety and effectiveness of a particular treatment.

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### **Go grassroots.**

Start talking with people in your community. Ask friends, coworkers, or neighbors if they know of integrative medicine options in your area. Many practitioners rely on word of mouth, so first-person accounts are helpful. Again, check client referrals, licensure, and other quality measures before committing to treatments.

### **Go back to basics.**

Of course, one of the best starting points is communicating your interest in IM to a healthcare provider you already trust: your physician. He/she may be able to suggest helpful additions to your healthcare routine and/or provide you with referrals for particular therapies. Always tell your primary physician about non-conventional therapies you might be using. Share your experiences, and encourage him or her to become more familiar with such treatments. Awareness of IM is growing at medical schools and among government officials who grant medical education funding. As IM programs proliferate and begin to graduate doctors, a larger supply of practitioners and more research will emerge.

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