Forms of Alternative Treatment

Policy Number: 10.01.527
Last Review: 7/2014
Origination: 7/2009
Next Review: 7/2015

Policy
Alternative treatment is considered a contract exclusion on most benefit plans.

Description of Procedure or Service
Alternative treatment consists of a group of diverse medical and health care systems, practices, and products that are not generally considered to be part of conventional medicine. While scientific evidence exists regarding some of these therapies, for most there are key questions that are yet to be answered through well-designed scientific studies – questions such as whether these therapies are safe and whether they work for the purposes for which they are used. Other terms used to describe such procedures include "holistic", "unconventional", and "complementary."

Alternative therapies are based on no common or consistent ideology, therapy of illness, or treatment. They derive from a variety of sources: ethnic and folk traditions, mainstream medical practices, established religions or semi-religious cults, philosophies or metaphysical movements, and health-and-wellness groups. The National Institutes of Health’s Office of Alternative Medicine classified alternative therapies into the following seven categories:

- Diet and nutrition - use of specific foods, vitamins, and minerals to prevent illness and to treat disease
- Alternative systems of medical practice - use of medicine from another culture (e.g., Ayurvedia, Chinese medicine)
- Herbal medicine - use of plants as medicine
- Mind-body interventions - use of the mind to enhance health (e.g., hypnosis, meditation, yoga)
- Manual healing methods - use of the hands to promote healing (e.g., massage, chiropractic and osteopathic manipulation)
- Pharmacologic and biologic treatments - use of various substances (e.g., drugs, serums) to treat specific medical problems
- Bioelectromagnetic therapies - use of electrical currents or magnetic fields to promote healing (e.g., bone repair, electroacupuncture)

The efficacy of various alternative medicine regimens is generally unproven, and some alternative therapies have been shown to be ineffective or even harmful.

Examples of Alternative Therapies include, but are not limited to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative Therapy</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>714-X (for cancer)</td>
<td>Active Release Technique (A.R.T)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acupressure</td>
<td>Alexander technique</td>
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<td>Amma therapy</td>
<td>Apitherapy</td>
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<td>Applied kinesiology</td>
<td>Aromatherapy</td>
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<td>Art therapy</td>
<td>Auto urine therapy</td>
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<td>Ayurveda</td>
<td>Bioenergetic therapy</td>
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<td>Brain Balance</td>
<td>Biofield Cancell (Entelev) cancer therapy</td>
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<td>Chinese blood cleaning (Poon's)</td>
<td>Carbon dioxide therapy</td>
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<td>Clinical ecology</td>
<td>Chung Moo Doe therapy</td>
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<td>Colonic irrigation</td>
<td>Coley's toxin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Craniosacral therapy</td>
<td>Conceptual mind-body techniques</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dance/Movement therapy</td>
<td>Cupping</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diet-based therapies</td>
<td>Deep breathing exercises</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ear Candling</td>
<td>Digital myography</td>
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<td>Electrodiagnosis according to Voll (EAV)</td>
<td>Egoscue method</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essential Metabolics Analysis (EMA)</td>
<td>Energy healing therapy/Reiki</td>
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<td>Feldenkrais method of exercise therapy</td>
<td>Essiac</td>
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<td>Fresh cell therapy</td>
<td>Flower essence</td>
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<td>Gemstone therapy</td>
<td>Functional intracellular analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gerson therapy</td>
<td>Geothermal spa treatment</td>
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<td>Graston technique</td>
<td>Glyconutrients</td>
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<td>Guided imagery</td>
<td>Greek cancer cure</td>
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<td>Hako-Med machine (electromedical horizontal therapy)</td>
<td>Hair analysis</td>
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<td>Hippotherapy</td>
<td>Hellerwork</td>
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<td>Hoxsey method</td>
<td>Homeopathic treatment</td>
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<td>Hydrazine sulfate</td>
<td>Humor therapy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Immunoaugmentive therapy</td>
<td>Infratronic Qi-Gong machine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inversion therapy</td>
<td>Hypnosis / Hypnotherapy</td>
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<td>Ion therapy</td>
<td>Insulin potentiation therapy</td>
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<td>Iscador</td>
<td>Iridology</td>
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<td>Kelley/Gonzales therapy</td>
<td>Kinesio Taping</td>
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<td>Laetrile</td>
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<td>Macrobiotic diet</td>
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<td>Massage</td>
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<td>Meditation/transcendental meditation</td>
<td>Megavitamin therapy</td>
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<td>Meridian therapy</td>
<td>Mesotherapy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Movement therapies</td>
<td>MTH-68 vaccine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS)</td>
<td>Music therapy</td>
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<td>Myotherapy</td>
<td>Natural products</td>
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<tr>
<td>Naturopathy</td>
<td>Neural therapy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nonvitamin and non-mineral, such as herbs and other products from plants, enzymes, etc.</td>
<td>Ozone therapy</td>
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<td>Pfirrmer deep muscle therapy</td>
<td>Polarity therapy</td>
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<td>Primal therapy</td>
<td>Progressive relaxation</td>
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<td>Psychodrama</td>
<td>Purging</td>
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<td>Qigong longevity exercises</td>
<td>Ream's testing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflexology (zone therapy)</td>
<td>Reiki</td>
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<td>Remedial massage</td>
<td>Revici's guided chemotherapy</td>
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<td>Rolfing (structural integration)</td>
<td>Rubenfeld synergy method (RSM)</td>
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<td>Sarapin injections</td>
<td>Shark cartilage products</td>
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<td>Tai chi</td>
<td>Therapeutic Eurythmy-movement therapy</td>
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<td>Therapeutic touch</td>
<td>Thought field therapy (TFT) (Callahan Techniques Training)</td>
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<td>Traditional healers</td>
<td>Trager approach</td>
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<td>Visceral manipulation therapy</td>
<td>Whitcomb technique</td>
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<td>Wurn technique/clear passage therapy</td>
<td>Yoga</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
References:


99. National Academies of Sciences, Institute of Medicine, Board on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, Committee on the Use of Complementary and Alternative Medicine by the American


**Additional Policy Key Words**

N/A

**Policy Implementation/Update Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Update Information</th>
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<tr>
<td>7/1/09</td>
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<td>4/1/10</td>
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<td>7/1/12</td>
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<td>7/1/13</td>
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<td>7/1/14</td>
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</table>

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