



CAM Use Diary



BC Cancer Agency
CARE + RESEARCH
An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

Funding for the CAMMEO Research Program
provided by:

Lotte & John Hecht
Memorial Foundation



BC Cancer Foundation
Supporting research & care at BC Cancer Agency

New Investigator funding to Dr. Lynda Balneaves
provided by:



CIHR IRSC
Canadian Institutes of Health Research
Instituts de recherche
en santé du Canada

Reproduction of this booklet or its content other than
for personal use requires permission of CAMMEO or its
representatives.

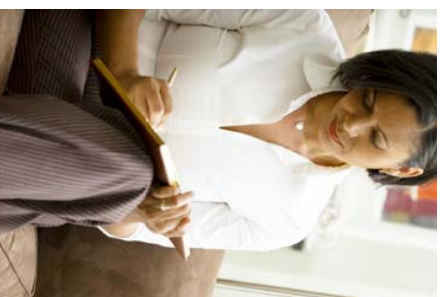
INTRODUCTION

Many people use complementary medicine (CAM) during their cancer treatment and care. CAM refers to a wide range of therapies such as massage, acupuncture, natural health products, and meditation. It can be challenging to decide which CAM therapies to use and to keep track of how well those therapies are working.

Keeping a diary of your CAM use may be a helpful strategy to see how well therapies are working and to maintain control over your cancer treatment and care. A diary may also be a helpful tool when talking to health professionals about your CAM use.

This diary can help you to:

- Keep track of your CAM use
- Monitor and evaluate the effect of the CAM therapies you are using
- Provide a written summary of your CAM use when talking with health professionals



This booklet is intended to help you monitor your CAM use. It is not intended to replace the advice of a qualified healthcare provider.

It is important to talk to your oncologist, oncology nurse(s), and family physician about your CAM use to check if:

- there are any known benefits or risks associated with the CAM therapy.
- there are any potential interactions with the cancer treatment or medications you are receiving or another health condition you have.

DISCLAIMER

HOW TO USE THE DIARY

(examples next 2 pages)

We recommend recording in the **top table row**:

- The name/brand of the therapy for that page
- Your goal of using the therapy (see notes below)
- The expected initial dose and frequency of use
- Any known side effects to watch for
- The outcome you hope to have and when you expect to experience the outcome.

In the **main table**, you have room to fill out the following:

- Date of use
- Effectiveness scale: *Is the therapy achieving your goal?* (1 = not effective to 10 = very effective)
- Any changes to the dose and frequency
- Side effects experienced
- Additional comments related to your therapy use

NOTES

- 1) Try just a few CAM at a time, or you may not be able to identify which therapy(s) may be producing the desired effects and/or which may be causing unwanted effects.
- 2) We recommend considering your goal of therapy use when ranking the effectiveness of a therapy. The effectiveness scale may not be appropriate for all CAM, especially those that may take weeks to see an effect.

Please take the time to verify what evidence is known about the use and effectiveness for your goal(s) of using the CAM, the possible side effects, and the possible interactions (could this CAM change the effectiveness of other medications or CAM you are using?).

Your health care professionals, as well as the recommended links on the [CAMEO website](#) or in the *CAM and Cancer in BC* booklet (available from the [CAMEO website](#)) will help you find that information. www.bccancer.bc.ca/cameo

Example 1: Yoga for relaxation

Therapy Name	Your Goal for Use	Dose & Frequency	Possible Side Effects	Evaluation Plan
Yoga (hatha)	Feel more relaxed	1 hour, 3 times a week	Muscle pain	Evaluate in 1 month: am I feeling more relaxed day to day?
Date	Effectiveness? From 1 to 10	Dose & Frequency	Experienced Side Effects	Comments
July 28	Too soon...	First visit, 1 hour	Stiff neck next day	Bring water to next class. Enjoyed, can see when I know poses will likely help with relaxation
July 31	6	1 hour	Now it's my calves!	I'm enjoying this. I feel more relaxed after class, will it last longer when I've done more?

Commentary

This is a straightforward example of using the diary to monitor one of the many CAM therapies that have very clear goals and easily assessed outcomes.

The person here is writing down the daily experience, and is giving the therapy one month before the first critical evaluation whether the therapy is achieving the goal.

Example 2: Natural Health Product, Garlic, for immune support

Therapy Name	Your Goal for Use	Dose & Frequency	Possible Side Effects	Evaluation Plan
Garlic	Boost my immune system	2 x 350 mg caps 2 times per day	Bleeding, bruising, change in blood pressure, heartburn, flatulence, diarrhea, decrease oral contraceptives	Evaluate every week: am I feeling better?
Date	Effectiveness? From 1 to 10	Dose & Frequency	Experienced Side Effects	Comments
August 3	4 feeling worse this week.	No change	Feeling bloated, mildly nauseated after meals & burping garlic.	Am I just under the weather, or is it the garlic? Will check with my GP about my blood pressure pills
August 10	5	No change	Hasn't improved much. Switch to odourless garlic helped the burping. Bloating and nausea better	Feeling okay. Is it the garlic? Will I really know? Will continue and keep monitoring.

Commentary

The goal here, like some goals for some therapies, may be difficult to assess. How are you going to assess your therapy? What will you measure or feel? This person is monitoring the effects weekly. After a month or more, they may try going off the therapy for week, and document and evaluate the change(s) that they feel.

For difficult to assess goals such as this, you may want to discuss the effects with your health care provider (a diary like this will help to provide an overall picture) as well as further ways to assess if it is helping you.

