



Healthy Mind...

Music Therapy Can Ease Holiday Stress

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Listening to favorite holiday tunes and burning relaxing candle scents, especially lavender, may help holiday stress.

For many, listening to Christmas carols or holiday classics may ease the tension and anxiety associated with the busiest time of year. Music has been used since ancient times as healing tool; the Greek philosophers Pythagoras, Aristotle and Plato all recognized the benefits of music in their writings.

The modern discipline of [music therapy](http://musictherapy.com) began early in the 20th Century with community musicians visiting veterans' hospitals around the country to play for those suffering from the traumas of war. Patients' responses led to the hiring of musicians by hospitals. Music is used to influence physical, emotional, cognitive and social well-being and improve quality of life for healthy people, as well as those who are disabled or ill. It may involve either listening to or performing music, with or without the presence of a music therapist.

Music therapists are professionally trained to design specialized applications of music according to an individual's needs using improvisation, receptive listening, song writing, lyric discussion, imagery, performance or learning through music. Sessions can be designed for individuals or groups based on the specific needs of the participants. Infants, children, adolescents, adults, the elderly and even animals can all potentially benefit from music therapy.

There is also evidence that combining music with guided imagery may lead to reduced fatigue, mood disturbance and blood levels of cortisol (a stress hormone). The relaxation response is a state that speeds many of the body's healing responses. This state is characterized by reduced heart rate, reduced blood pressure, reduced tension and many other beneficial changes. Evidence that music therapy can lead to the relaxation response has been found in studies with heart bypass surgery patients, healthy college students, infants being treated for chronic lung disease, patients on breathing machines, healthy males and acute heart attack patients.

Many different forms of music intervention have been used to reduce anxiety in a variety of medical conditions and medical procedures. Most studies have positive findings, although not all do. Overall, the evidence favors use of music interventions for anxiety, although more studies are needed to determine what forms work best.

You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face... You must do the thing you cannot do.

Eleanor Roosevelt

Healthy Body...

Tai Chi for Fall Prevention

Reprinted with permission from [Natural Standard.com](http://NaturalStandard.com)



[Tai chi](http://TaiChi.com), a system of movements and positions that aim to address the body and mind as an interconnected system, is traditionally believed to improve posture, balance, flexibility and strength. A new study found that tai chi may help prevent falls in the elderly.

Falls are a leading cause of injury and death among older adults. Seniors are more likely to fall because their muscle strength and coordination lessens over time, resulting in decreased mobility, agility and flexibility.

Participants in the study were 60 years old and older. Subjects took one-hour tai chi classes, taught by trained instructors, twice a week for 12 weeks. A two-week pilot evaluation indicated that the program was feasible, as there was good class attendance and participants were both interested and satisfied with the classes.

Based on the results of the study, the authors have created a user-friendly program package that includes an instructor's manual, instructor supplements and participant's course book. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funded the study.

Li F, Harmer P, Mack KA, Sleet D, Fisher KJ, Kohn MA, Millet LM, Xu J, Yang T, Sutton B, Tompkins Y. Tai Chi: moving for better balance -- development of a community-based falls prevention program. *J Phys Act Health.* 2008 May;5(3):445-55.

If you would like to be added to our mailing, you can do so at mdanderson.org.

Recipe... *Sweet Potato Oven Fries*

1 large sweet potato
2 teaspoons canola oil
1/4 teaspoon salt
Pinch of cayenne pepper

Peel and cut sweet potatoes into wedges and toss with oil, salt and pepper. In a single layer, place the seasoned wedges out on a cookie sheet. Place in an oven preheated to 450°F. Turn halfway through baking. Fries are done when brown and tender.



As always, please be mindful of any food allergies or dietary restrictions you may have.

Please consult with your medical provider if you have any questions.

Place...of wellness Spotlight

Introduction to Reflexology with Margaret Harle

Discover the benefits of Reflexology with Margaret Harle, R.N., M.S.N., O.C.N., in an educational session and hands-on demonstration.

Reflexology is a self healing art focusing where nerve endings are located on the hands and feet. When done by a skilled practitioner, this ancient remedy deeply relaxes and relieves tension with benefits that can be felt throughout the body.



Introduction to Reflexology is held on the fourth Wednesday of the month from 10-11 a.m. at the Main Clinic location.

For Place...of wellness Facilitators

M. D. Anderson Cancer Center recently formed the Department of General Oncology, a new unit within the Division of Cancer Medicine. Integrative Medicine and Place...of wellness have moved from the Palliative Care Department to better align with the mission of this new department.

The Department of General Oncology will unite non-disease site oncology, incorporate integrative oncology and survivorship issues and address minority and underserved patients. Additionally, this new department will oversee community oncology through satellite practices in the Houston area and beyond.

Currently M. D. Anderson has satellite centers in Bay Area, Bellaire and The Woodlands. Katy and Fort Bend are in various stages of building. These centers have requested Place...of wellness programs and we are working to establish programs at each of these neighborhood centers.

Expansion to Satellite Centers

Good people know other good people. Let us know if you have suggestions for facilitators or programs for M. D. Anderson's Satellite Centers in The Woodlands, Bay Area or Bellaire. We will eventually need resources in Katy and Fort Bend as well.

Please contact your program manager:

Alex de Alvarado at Mays Clinic (ACB) – 713-563-8867
Andrea Warren at Main Clinic – 713-563-9688

Events & Activities

October 4, 2008 – Houston's Komen "Race for the Cure" – For details and to register, visit komen-houston.org

Integrative Medicine Program Lecture Series

October 16, 2008 – **Diet and Cancer: The Fourth Paradigm** LOCATION CHANGE: Rotary House Conference Rm
Walter Willett, M.D., Ph.D., Chair, Department of Nutrition, Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, MA

November 6, 2008 – **Integrative Medicine in Switzerland** LOCATION CHANGE: ACB1.2325 a, b & c
Peter Heusser, M.D., Kollegiale Instanz für Komplementärmedizin, Universität Bern, Switzerland

December 4, 2008 – **Physical Activity in Cancer Survivors**

Kerry Courneya, Ph.D., Professor and Canada Research Chair in Physical Activity & Cancer, Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Lectures take place at 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. in Hickey Auditorium (R11.1400). Lunch provided. For more information about the lecture series, please visit the Complementary/Integrative Medicine Education Resources website at www.mdanderson.org/CIMER

Research... Antioxidants & Chemobrain

Antioxidants May Prevent "Chemo-Brain"

Reprinted with permission from [Natural Standard.com](http://NaturalStandard.com)

A [new animal study](#) shows that antioxidant therapy may protect against memory and attention problems commonly seen in cancer patients who are undergoing chemotherapy.

When cancer treatment interferes with thinking, it is sometimes called "chemo-brain" or "chemo-fog." Chemo-brain is estimated to affect about 20-30 percent of chemotherapy patients, but its cause remains unknown. The condition is generally mild and symptoms gradually improve over time after chemotherapy is completed.

Researchers from West Virginia University School of Medicine tested whether injections with the antioxidant N-acetyl cysteine (NAC) could prevent chemo-related memory changes in rats. One group of rats received two common cancer drugs, doxorubicin (Adriamycin®) and cyclophosphamide (Cytoxan®), four times weekly. Compared to the control animals, the rats that received chemotherapy had lower memory scores, indicating chemo-brain. However, chemo-brain was prevented when rats received NAC injections three times weekly during chemotherapy.

Although these results, published in the journal *Metabolic Brain Disease*, are promising, additional research in humans is needed before recommendations can be made in humans. In the meantime, cancer patients should not take antioxidant supplements unless under the supervision of their healthcare providers. There has been concern that antioxidants may theoretically interfere with the effectiveness of chemotherapy in humans, but study results are inconclusive.

In a [related review article](#), researchers have found that antioxidant supplementation during chemotherapy may reduce toxicities, thereby reducing side effects. While most studies showed that antioxidants had positive effects on toxicity, statistical power and poor study quality were concerns with some studies.

