

About Integrative Medicine

A Guide to Self-Care and Support | Fall 2022

CHIEF'S NOTE



*Jun Mao, MD, MSCE
Chief, Integrative Medicine Service*

As we say goodbye to summer and welcome fall, the Integrative Medicine Service is ready to support you through education programs, research studies, and online classes to keep your mind and body active and strong.

In this issue, we learn about the recommendations from an important new joint guideline on pain in cancer by the Society for Integrative Oncology (SIO) and American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO). We share information about the upcoming SIO International Conference, including how patients and patient advocates can get involved. We talk to Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK) integrative medicine physician assistant Lillian Rodich about how to care for your gut health throughout the cancer journey. Finally, we discover the evidence for calendula in our About Herbs feature and share our upcoming schedule of online programming.

Be well,
Jun

New Cancer Clinical Guideline Recommends Massage and Acupuncture for Pain

by Christina Seluzicki



For people impacted by cancer, pain is one of the most common and worrisome symptoms. Pain may be caused by cancer treatments, which can lead some to discontinue these treatments in order to regain a higher quality of life. However, such discontinuation can leave these patients more vulnerable to recurrence.

[A new joint guideline](#) from the Society for Integrative Oncology (SIO), the leading professional integrative oncology organization, and the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), the leading professional organization for oncology doctors, provides evidenced recommendations for addressing pain. A panel of experts in cancer care, co-chaired by MSK's Chief of the Integrative Medicine Service, Dr. Jun J. Mao, thoroughly reviewed published literature from randomized clinical trials, assessed the evidence, and made recommendations based on the strength of evidence.

Dr. Mao says, "This important new guideline offers safe, evidence-based guidance for clinicians, people with cancer, and their loved ones so that they can confidently choose the most effective complementary treatments to address symptoms and side effects from cancer."

The guideline recommends the following modalities based on sound research evidence of benefit and safety:

- Acupuncture for people experiencing joint pain from aromatase inhibitors. Aromatase inhibitors are a medication that people with breast cancer may be offered.
- Acupuncture for people who have general pain or musculoskeletal pain from cancer.
- Massage for people with pain during palliative and hospice care.

Acupuncture is a part of traditional Chinese medicine. It involves the insertion of thin needles at specific points on the body for therapeutic effect. MSK's licensed acupuncturists are highly skilled in treating people affected by cancer. MSK offers [acupuncture](#) at all its regional sites in New York and New Jersey.

Massage involves the manual manipulation of the body's muscles and soft tissues. MSK offers oncology-focused medical massage that



is specially designed for people who have gone through cancer treatment. The oncology [massage](#) program at MSK is one of the oldest in the country. Our massage therapists have advanced training to safely provide personalized treatments for their patients. Through massage treatments, they can help address pain, muscle tension, and discomfort following surgery.

To learn more about massage and acupuncture treatments, and to schedule an appointment, please call [646-449-1010](tel:646-449-1010).

Connecting Patient Care and Integrative Medicine Research

by Jodi MacLeod



Jodi MacLeod is a patient advocate and cancer survivor who contributes to patient-centered outcomes research

in MSK's Integrative Medicine Service. She also serves as Secretary of the Society for Integrative Oncology (SIO) and is Co-Chair of the SIO Patient Advocate Committee.

The Society for Integrative Oncology (SIO), the premier professional organization for integrative oncology, will host its 19th International Conference in Scottsdale, Arizona, from October 20 to October 22, 2022. Patient advocates will join clinicians, researchers, and other integrative medicine professionals in the sunny Sonoran Desert to learn about this year's theme, "Delivering Multidisciplinary Integrative Oncology Care Across Communities."

The conference provides opportunities for attendees to hear important updates on integrative medicine research and meet international experts from diverse world regions and cultures through presentations, roundtables, and program tracks. Among them, a patient advocate program track will highlight sessions that may be of interest to people with cancer, their caregivers, and professionals who advocate for them.

This includes the Patient Advocate Welcome Event, which will feature a presentation by Dr. Iris Zhi, an MSK breast oncologist and integrative oncology researcher, on the importance of partnership between patient advocates and researchers. Dr. Zhi says: "Hearing directly from our patients and addressing their needs are critical for guiding integrative oncology research. Patient advocacy opens a direct dialogue to bring researchers, clinicians, patients, and caregivers together. These conversations can not only identify barriers and untapped needs but also

foster collaborations in the field." Thanks to sponsorship support, SIO has been able to award scholarships to patient advocates from the United States and other countries to attend the conference.

Of special interest to the MSK community, on the first evening, a special hybrid event will be held to celebrate the legacy of SIO's founding president and the founding chief of MSK's Integrative Medicine Service, the late Dr. Barrie Cassileth. MSK's Director of Integrative Breast Oncology and SIO immediate past president, Dr. Ting Bao, worked closely with Dr. Cassileth. She says: "The significant development of the field of integrative medicine would not have been possible without the foundation that Dr. Cassileth laid two decades ago. We are forever grateful for her incredible contributions."

To learn more about the conference, please [visit the SIO website](#).

Integrative Medicine at Home Membership Program



Start your membership online today. Visit msk.org/athome.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Monthly membership: **\$25**
Three-month membership: **\$60**
Six-month membership: **\$120** (includes one free workshop)

AS A MEMBER, YOU CAN ENJOY:

- › Connecting with your cancer community
- › Staying active with guidance from MSK experts
- › Learning new skills to increase resilience and decrease stress
- › Unlimited access to daily fitness and mind-body classes
- › A dedicated website with on-demand videos to help keep you moving on your schedule
- › Discounts on our small group workshops and mind-body series



Addressing Gut Health Before, During, and After Cancer Treatment

by Lillian Rodich, PA



Lillian Rodich is a physician assistant (PA) in MSK's Integrative Medicine Service who has spent her entire PA career working with oncology patients. She received her Bachelor of Science in nutritional studies prior to attending PA school. She treats

patients in a holistic manner, noting how their nutrition, stress, and activity affect their overall wellness. Here, she answers common questions about gut health.

What can I do for my gut health during treatment?

I advise people not to make many radical changes to their diet (such as becoming strictly vegan or fasting for prolonged periods) during treatment because the body is already going through a lot. Instead, focus on obtaining an assortment of nutrient- and calorie-rich foods. Those can be two in the same: You don't have to eat calorie-rich foods that throw nutrients out the window. Having variety in your food also ensures you're getting a good mix of different vitamins and minerals.

You may experience symptoms that make it challenging to find foods that feel good to eat. But once you find a food that you tolerate well, get the most bang for your buck out of that food. For example, if you are experiencing nausea and diarrhea but can tolerate plain oatmeal, add a spoonful of almond butter, a handful of cashews, or berries or a banana to make it more nutritionally valuable. Add avocado or almond butter to plain toast to obtain some healthy omega-3s.

Should I be taking a probiotic for my gut health before and after treatment?

Probiotics are microorganisms that can be considered "good bacteria." They are part of our gut microbiome, which is in our intestines, along with other microorganisms. The organisms in your microbiome, especially probiotic strains, can help with everything from digestion to shaping your immune system. I recommend eating a variety of foods that are naturally rich in probiotics before and after treatment. This ensures that you get diversity in probiotic strains and varied nutritional value from each food. A probiotic pill usually only has one or two strains of bacteria, so taking that every day does not give you the diversity that is

important for a healthy gut. Once the good bacteria are in your gut, you want to keep them active, fed, and happy. Probiotics like to eat certain foods called prebiotics that help feed your gut and help your gut microbiome flourish and grow. Luckily, prebiotics are readily available in common foods (see the box below).















Does stress play a role in gut health?

Yes! The number one killer of these gut cells and flora is stress. So you could be doing everything right with your nutrition, but if you do not have good stress management skills, it can hurt your gut health. Luckily, there are many ways to manage stress, such as taking a walk, getting a good night's sleep, practicing tai chi or yoga, meditating, and getting a massage or acupuncture treatment. We offer many of [these services](#) at Integrative Medicine within MSK.

Before taking any supplement, talk with your provider. It is also important to talk with your provider if you are on a neutropenic diet after treatment or if you are on a special diet post-surgery, such as a low fiber diet, as these tips may not be appropriate for you at that time.

Please call [646-608-8550](tel:646-608-8550) to schedule an appointment with one of our providers to develop your own holistic care plan.

Common Food Sources for Probiotics and Prebiotics

Probiotics	Prebiotics
Kefir 	Onions, garlic, shallots, leeks 
Greek yogurt 	Asparagus 
Kimchi 	Oats 
Sourdough 	Bananas 
Sauerkraut 	Apples 
Tempeh 	Chicory root 
	Barley 
	Artichokes 



Calendula

by Jyothirmal Gubili

Calendula is a fast-growing annual herb native to Asia and Southern Europe but is now grown as a decorative plant in many parts of the world. The fresh or dried whole flower is used in traditional medicine for wound healing; to treat sunburns, bee stings, upset stomach, ulcers; to reduce inflammation; to relieve menstrual cramps; and to soothe and soften the skin.

Calendula extracts have been shown to reduce inflammation, kill or stop the growth of microorganisms, prevent or delay cell damage, and inhibit tumor

growth in experiments done in the laboratory and in animal models.

Clinical studies indicate effectiveness of topical calendula against ear infections in children, and in treating venous leg ulcers and vaginal candidiasis (vaginal yeast infection). Topical calendula was also reported to be useful in preventing acute dermatitis (skin inflammation) during radiation therapy in people with breast cancer. A mouthwash containing calendula decreased chemotherapy-induced stomatitis (inflammation of the mucous lining of the mouth). More research is needed to confirm these findings.

For more details about calendula, see our full monograph on the



[About Herbs](#) website or download the About Herbs app (available for Android via [Google Play](#) and iOS via the [App Store](#)).

New! About Herbs App for Android and iOS

Do you want help figuring out the value of using common herbs and other dietary supplements? Learn the latest evidence for 290 herbs and supplements.

Download the app for Android via [Google Play](#) and for iOS via the [App Store](#)

Upcoming Online Programming

Register online today to join one of these upcoming online wellness programs. Scan the QR code with your phone to sign up online or call **646-449-1010**.



Learn about the benefits of [tai chi](#), [meditation](#), [yoga](#), and more on our [About Herbs](#) website.

COST

Workshops: \$20 for members; \$25 regular price

Regular series: \$100 for members; \$125 regular price

Meditation Series: \$125 for members; \$155 regular price

OCTOBER

- › **Workshop: Martial Arts for Strength and Balance**
Wednesday, October 12, 7:00 PM to 8:15 PM
- › **Series: Mindful Self-Compassion**
Sundays, October 16 to November 20
7:00 PM to 8:30 PM
- › **Series: Beginning Tai Chi**
Wednesdays, October 26 to November 30
6:00 PM to 7:00 PM

NOVEMBER

- › **Workshop: Osteoporosis: How To Build Bones With Exercise, Yoga, and Nutrition**
Thursday, November 3, 1:00 PM to 2:15 PM
- › **Series: Yoga Essentials: Focus on Stronger Bones**
Wednesdays, November 9 to December 14
11:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Did you know we offer private online yoga, meditation, and martial arts sessions? To learn more, call 646-449-1010.