



## SAGE TEA NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

# LEARNING CENTER

## Q: What is a Naturopathic Doctor?

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**Answer:** A fully qualified professional health practitioner

"Naturopathic doctors combine the wisdom of nature with the rigors of modern science. Steeped in traditional healing methods, principles and practices, naturopathic medicine focuses on holistic, proactive prevention and comprehensive diagnosis and treatment. By using protocols that minimize the risk of harm, naturopathic doctors help facilitate the body's inherent ability to restore and maintain optimal health. It is the naturopathic doctor's role to identify and remove barriers to good health by helping to create a healing internal and external environment.

Naturopathic doctors work in private practices, hospitals, clinics and community health centers. NDs practice throughout the United States and Canada. **Qualified naturopathic doctors undergo rigorous training before they become licensed health-care practitioners.** Visit our organization's Professional Education page at <http://www.aanp.org> to learn about naturopathic education.

NDs treat all medical conditions and can provide both individual and family health care. Among the most common ailments they treat are allergies, chronic pain, digestive issues, hormonal imbalances, obesity, respiratory conditions, heart disease, fertility problems, menopause, adrenal fatigue, cancer, fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome. In some states NDs can perform minor surgeries, such as removing cysts or stitching up superficial wounds, but not in California. However, they do not practice major surgery in any state. NDs are trained to utilize prescription drugs, although the emphasis of naturopathic medicine is the use of natural healing agents.

### YOUR FIRST VISIT

A naturopathic doctor will take time with you. During your first appointment, your doctor will take your health history, find out about your diet, stress levels, use of tobacco and alcohol, and discuss why you're there. He or she may perform an examination and order diagnostic tests. Naturopathic doctors keep themselves up-to-date on the latest scientific research and incorporate this evidence into their treatments. The naturopathic doctor will work with you to set up a customized health management strategy. If necessary, your doctor will refer you to other health-care practitioners.

A first visit with a patient may last one to two hours and follow-up visits range from 30 to 60 minutes, although this varies depending on the ND. Naturopathic doctors need sufficient time to ask questions and understand the patient's health goals. NDs also need time to gather information, do an appropriate examination and teach his or her patients about managing their condition and improving their health. An ND may also use diagnostic tests to fully understand their patient's health status. Besides taking the time to carefully and fully assess a patient's root problem, NDs speak and understand the language of conventional medicine. They can diagnose the way MDs do—yet, they bring to the patient a whole new arsenal of treatments and insights. Instead of waiting for a disease to emerge, NDs work to head it off before it happens."

From the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians website: <http://www.aanp.org>