



# Natural Standard

The Authority on Integrative Medicine

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## Natural Standard Exhibiting at ASHP Conference



Natural Standard will be exhibiting at booth # 1954 at the 42nd ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting and Exhibition.

Programs at this Midyear Clinical Meeting were planned to meet the needs of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians in a variety of healthcare systems including large and small hospitals, managed care facilities, inpatient facilities, outpatient clinics and homecare settings, as well as the pharmaceutical industry and academia.

Whether a new pharmacist or seasoned professional, pharmacy student or educator, the 42nd Midyear Clinical Meeting and Exhibition will help participants increase their knowledge and develop their abilities.

To register, please click [here](#).

For program and exhibitor information, please visit [www.ashp.org](http://www.ashp.org).

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Common "Scents" for Holiday Stress



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 a healing tool; the Greek philosophers Pythagoras, Aristotle and Plato all recognized the benefits of music in their writings.

The modern discipline of music therapy 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.

Another solution for calming holiday nerves may be burning relaxing candle scents; lavender in particular has been scientifically proven to reduce anxiety and stress.

Fragrant oils have been used for thousands of years to lubricate the skin, purify air and repel insects. Ancient Egyptians used fragrant oils for bathing and massage. Plant fragrances were given to patients with bubonic plague in ancient Roman, Greek and Medieval times. Essential oils of plants have been used medicinally through application directly to the skin (usually diluted), as a part of massage, added to bathwater, via steam inhalation or in mouthwashes.

The modern practice of aromatherapy is often traced to the French chemist René-Maurice Gattefosse.

Gattefosse is said to have poured lavender oil onto his hand after experiencing an accidental burn. The pain and redness reportedly disappeared, and the burn healed more rapidly than expected. In later experiments, Gattefosse studied other oils in the treatment of various skin problems and coined the term aromatherapy in the early 20th century. Research with plant oils was later conducted by other French scientists, and techniques were developed that are still in use today.

Aromatherapy is a technique in which essential oils from plants are used with the intention of preventing or treating illness, reducing stress or enhancing well-being.

Fragrant oils and products containing man-made compounds are not used in the practice of genuine aromatherapy. Although many gift shops sell scented candles, pomanders and potpourri as aromatherapy, genuine aromatherapy treatments use higher strength (concentrated) essential oils drawn from various herbs.

Early evidence suggests that lavender may reduce anxiety and improve mood, but some other aromas may not. Lavender is found in the Mediterranean, the Arabian Peninsula, Russia and Africa and has been used cosmetically and medicinally throughout history. In modern times, the fragrant oils of lavender flowers are used in aromatherapy, baked goods, tea, candles, detergents, massage oils, perfumes, powders, shampoo and soaps. More studies of stronger design are needed to confirm these findings, but there is some support for the use of lavender in reducing anxiety.

For more information on these and other natural therapies for stress, please visit [Natural Standard's Comparative Effectiveness](#) database.

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Recent studies on the possible negative effects of birth control on the heart have raised awareness about the lack of long-term safety information on birth control.

Consumers may be interested to learn that present studies have proven the effectiveness of a modern form of natural family planning. Additionally, the federal government has approved two codes specifically for natural family planning within the medical coding system used by the government, insurance companies, medical clinics and healthcare providers.



On October 1, 2007, the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-9-CM) published the following codes for natural family planning:

- V25.04: Counseling and instruction in natural family planning to avoid pregnancy;
- V26.41: Procreative counseling and advice using natural family planning.

Guidelines for reporting and coding with the ICD-9-CM are made by two federal government agencies: the National Center for Health Statistics and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Guidelines also are approved by four participating agencies: the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the National Center for Health Statistics, the American Hospital Association and the American Health Information Management Association.

The new ICD-9-CM codes allow health insurance companies to cover activities such as education classes in the methods of natural family planning.

This information comes along with the new U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that Chlamydia and other sexually transmitted diseases are at an all time high in girls and young women, often resulting in infertility. The report suggests that this increase in STDs may be a result of the misuse of, and lack of education surrounding, birth control pills.

Researchers from the University of Heidelberg in Germany have found that a method of natural family planning that uses two indicators to identify the fertile phase in a woman's menstrual cycle is as effective as the contraceptive pill for avoiding unplanned pregnancies if used correctly.

In the study, the effectiveness of fertility awareness based (FAB) methods of family planning was critically reviewed. The study specifically investigated the efficacy and the acceptability of the symptothermal method (STM), a FAB method that uses two indicators of fertility: temperature and cervical secretions observation.

In the largest study of STM, the researchers found that if the couples either abstained from sex or used a barrier method during the fertile period, the rate of unplanned pregnancies per year was 0.4% and 0.6%, respectively. Out of all the 900 women who took part in the study, including those who had unprotected sex during their fertile period, 1.8 per 100 became unintentionally pregnant.

The study authors suggested that the effectiveness of STM is comparable to the effectiveness of modern contraceptive methods such as oral contraceptives, and is an effective and acceptable method of family planning.

A number of fertility awareness based methods of family planning have been advocated over the years, but comparisons between different methods and studies of their effectiveness have been limited and

hampered by problems such as differences in cultural backgrounds, different ways to measure the effectiveness of a FAB method, different ways of classifying unintended pregnancies and other study design problems, according to the researchers.

The researchers recommended that women or couples who want to learn the method should buy a book, attend an NFP course or get some teaching by a qualified NFP teacher and acknowledged that although learning STM is usually no problem, in contrast to the oral contraceptive pill or other family planning methods, STM needs more engagement and time to learn it.

Every month the women in the study sent charts to the researchers that showed their cycles and their observations of temperature and cervical secretions and that recorded their sexual behavior and family planning intentions for the next cycle.

Of the 900 women, 322 used only STM and 509 women used STM with occasional barriers during the fertile time. Sixty-nine women did not document their sexual behavior. Out of the women who documented their sexual behavior and abstained from sex during their fertile period ("perfect use"), the unintended pregnancy rate was 0.4 per 100 women and 13 cycles, and 0.6 for women who used STM plus a barrier if they had sex during their fertile period.

For cycles in which couples had unprotected sex during the fertile phase, the pregnancy rates rose to 7.5 per 100 women and 13 cycles. The drop-out rate from using STM for reasons such as dissatisfaction or difficulties with the method was 9.2 per 100 women and 13 cycles, and compared well with the drop-out rates from other methods of family planning, which can be as high as 30 percent, although direct comparisons are difficult due to study design problems. The study authors believe there was a fairly good acceptability for this particular FAB method.

The study reports that the authors were surprised by the relatively low rate of unintended pregnancies (7.5 percent) among women who had unprotected sex during their fertile period. The authors explained that if people are trying for pregnancy, a pregnancy rate of 28 percent per cycle is expected.

The study authors concluded that STM is a highly effective family planning method, provided the appropriate guidelines are consistently adhered to.

Early studies have also suggested that couples who practice NFP: have a dramatically low (0.2%) divorce rate; experience happier marriages; are happier and more satisfied in their everyday lives; have considerably more marital relations; share a deeper intimacy with their spouse than those who contracept; and realize a deeper level of communication with their spouse. Further, more well-designed studies are needed.

For more information on natural therapies and fertility, please visit [Natural Standard's Foods, Herbs & Supplements](#) and [Health & Wellness](#) databases.

To comment on this story, please click [here](#) to enter the [Natural Standard](#) blog.

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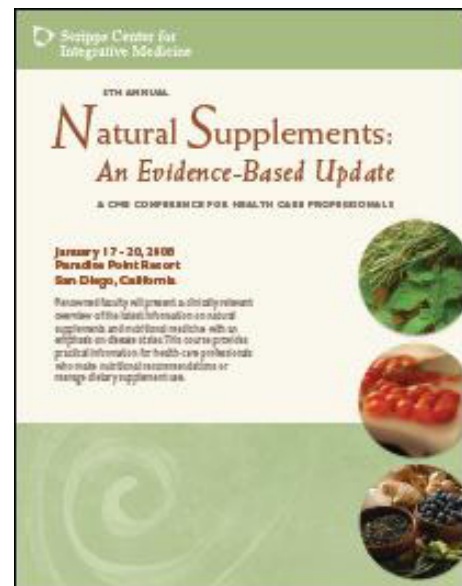
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## Natural Supplements: An Evidence-Based Update

The 5th Annual Natural Supplements: An Evidence-Based Update will be held January 17-20, 2008 at Paradise Point Resort, San Diego, California.

Americans spend in excess of \$20 billion annually on herbal and dietary supplements, most often without the guidance of a healthcare practitioner. Many clinicians require timely, evidence-based tools for discussing the risks, benefits and regulatory issues related to the use of natural supplements.

During this informative and comprehensive CME conference, renowned faculty will present a concise, clinically relevant overview of natural supplements in evidence-based practice, with an emphasis on disease states. This medical education event is applicable to anyone wanting to acquire the knowledge and expertise for addressing and managing dietary supplement use.



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Yohimbine, found in the bark of the *Pausinystalia yohimbe* tree, may reduce the occurrence of slowed heart beat, a new study suggests.

Yohimbine hydrochloride is a standardized form of yohimbine that is available as a prescription drug in the United States and has been shown to be effective in the treatment of erectile dysfunction in clinical trials.

There is little clinical research using yohimbe bark extract, which generally contains low amounts of yohimbine, and commercial preparations may or may not share the same effects as yohimbine hydrochloride.

Traditionally, yohimbe bark was used as an aphrodisiac and mild hallucinogen. However, all information related to its efficacy is folkloric, empirical and anecdotal, or extrapolated from studies of yohimbine hydrochloride.

For over a century, yohimbine has been used as a treatment for erectile dysfunction, and this remains the most popular use of this extract. Yohimbe has also been used in traditional medicine to treat high blood pressure, chest pain and age-related cognitive disorders.

Although yohimbe bark extract has been used in Germany for the treatment of sexual disorders, "feebleness" and "exhaustion," the expert German panel, the Commission E, does not recommend its use due to a high risk-benefit ratio.

Yohimbine is derived from the bark (of the trunk and branches) of an evergreen tree native to West Africa (Congo, Zaire, Cameroon, Nigeria and Gabon). The cork-like bark of the Yohimbe tree contains the indole alkaloid, yohimbine.

Researchers from Germany investigated whether a yohimbine extract would reduce slowed heart rate and results showed no effect.

For more information on yohimbine, please visit [Natural Standard's Foods, Herbs & Supplements](#) database.

To comment on this story, please click [here](#) to enter the [Natural Standard](#) blog.

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- 1) Tank J, Heusser K, Diedrich A, et al. Yohimbine attenuates baroreflex-mediated bradycardia in humans. *Hypertension*. 2007 Nov;50(5):899-903. Epub 2007 Sep 17. [View Abstract](#).
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Two new studies have documented the opinions of doctors and patients on the popularity and future of natural medicine.

Researchers from the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center suggested that natural products may provide a basis for new therapeutics.

The researchers explained that phytochemicals have potent antitumor properties and have provided multiple active compounds in the past. Although there is an increasing focus on 'designer' targeted anticancer agents, more research is needed.

The report stressed that the chemical diversity, structural complexity, affordability, lack of toxic effects and biologic activity of natural products makes them ideal candidates for new therapies. Some natural products may disrupt pathways leading to cancer and may have additive effects with chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

The review authors focused on the mechanism of action of key natural products and promising preclinical data on their efficacy as anticancer agents, as single agents and in combination with standard therapies.

A related study examined patient preferences for natural medicine.

Researchers from the Marino Center for Progressive Health in Cambridge, MA explained that integrative medicine, a combination of conventional and complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), has become a popular source of medical care, yet little is known about its use.

The study investigated the motivations of people who choose integrative medicine for their primary care needs.

The study included six focus groups with a total of 37 regular users of integrative medicine. Focus group meetings were audiotaped and transcribed. They analyzed the information to determine the motivations for the use of integrative medicine.

The study found that participants' beliefs include the following: the combination of CAM and conventional medicine is better than either alone; health is a combination of physical, emotional and spiritual well being; nutrition and lifestyle play a role in wellness; and drugs should be avoided except as a last resort.

The study also found that: participants suffer from health problems that are not well treated by conventional medicine; participants want to discuss CAM with physicians and obtain guidance on its use; and participants want time with their providers to feel listened to and to have the opportunity for shared decision-making.

The study concluded that much of what patients are seeking in integrative medical care is likely universally shared: a strong therapeutic relationship with providers who listen and provide time and knowledgeable advice. Users believe a combined approach of CAM and conventional medicine is better than either alone and want to be able to discuss CAM use with their providers.

For more information on integrative medicine, please visit [Natural Standard's Foods, Herbs & Supplements](#) and [Health & Wellness](#) databases.

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## Chitosan and Blood Thinners

Researchers have uncovered a potential interaction between chitosan, derived from the shells of crustaceans (crabs, shrimp, etc.), and blood thinning medications, such as warfarin.

Chitosan is a polysaccharide with a number of commercial and possible biomedical uses. Purified quantities of chitosan are available for biomedical applications.

Researchers from Taipei Veterans General Hospital and National Yang-Ming University in Taiwan reported a case in which the anticoagulation (blood thinning) effect of warfarin appeared to have been increased by chitosan, probably due to interference with the absorption of vitamin K.

The study authors reported that chitosan is a positively charged polymer that binds to the negatively charged lipids and bile acids in the gastrointestinal tract. It can affect the absorption of [vitamin A](#), [vitamin D](#), [vitamin E](#) and [vitamin K](#). Therefore, the anticoagulation effect of warfarin may be enhanced by chitosan through this mechanism.

The study authors concluded that although not previously reported, healthcare professionals should be aware of the potential interaction between chitosan and warfarin.

For more information on herb-drug interactions, please visit **Natural Standard's** [Interactions](#) database.

To comment on this story, please click [here](#) to enter the **Natural Standard** blog.

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## CAM for Children's Cancer

A new study investigated the use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) among Mexican children with cancer.

Researchers from Hospital de Pediatría, Centro Médico Nacional de Occidente, Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social in Mexico examined the types of CAM used by pediatric cancer patients attending a tertiary care hospital in Western Mexico.

Researchers interviewed parents in a cross-sectional survey and types of CAM employed as well as factors related to their use and their perceived effectiveness were determined.

The survey was completed by 110 parents of pediatric cancer patients; 77 patients or 70 percent received CAM. Of CAM used, herbal remedies (69 percent) and taken by mouth products (26 percent) were most common.

Prior CAM use by the family was associated with use in patients. Perceived usefulness was reported in 79 percent of CAM users.

The study authors concluded that CAM use in Mexican children is common, most frequently with herbal therapies. The majority perceived benefits with its usage but in most cases, the treating physician was not informed about this practice.

For more information on integrative therapies for cancer, please visit [Natural Standard's Comparative Effectiveness](#) and [Conditions](#) databases. Additionally, information on herbs, foods, supplements and integrative modalities is available in both English and Spanish.

To comment on this story, please click [here](#) to enter the [Natural Standard](#) blog.

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The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) followed the trends in folic acid supplement intake in women of reproductive age.

Folate and folic acid are forms of a water-soluble B vitamin. Folate occurs naturally in food and folic acid is the synthetic form of this vitamin. Folic acid is well-tolerated in amounts found in fortified foods and supplements. Sources include cereals, baked goods, leafy vegetables (spinach, broccoli and lettuce), okra, asparagus, fruits (bananas, melons and lemons), legumes, yeast, mushrooms, organ meat (beef liver, kidney), orange juice and tomato juice. Folic acid is frequently used in combination with other B vitamins in vitamin B complex formulations.

The CDC reports that daily intake of 400 micrograms of folic acid before conception can reduce by approximately 80 percent the risk for having an infant with a neural tube defect, such as spina bifida. Neural tube defects are birth defects that occur somewhere in the neural tube, which consists of the brain, spinal cord and nervous system. Although other risk factors for neural tube defects exist, such as diabetes, obesity and family history, prevention measures have focused mostly on promoting folic acid consumption.

The CDC suggests that women ensure they are consuming the recommended amount of folic acid by eating one serving of breakfast cereal fortified with 100 percent of the recommended daily value of folic acid or by taking a supplement with 400 micrograms of folic acid daily.

According to the CDC, annual surveys conducted for the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation indicate that 40 percent of all U.S. women of reproductive age (i.e., aged 15-45 years) took supplements containing folic acid in 2007, up from 28 percent in 1995.

To analyze trends in folic acid-containing supplement intake among California women aged 18-44 years during 2002-2006, the California Department of Public Health conducted trend analyses of data from the California Women's Health Survey. This report summarizes the results of those analyses, which indicated that although the overall prevalence of intake of folic acid-containing supplements remained stable from 2002 (40 percent) to 2006 (41 percent) in California, use of such supplements decreased among Hispanic women and women with less education.

Downward trends among Hispanic women are of particular concern because 1) Hispanic women are at increased risk for having a fetus or an infant with a neural tube defect compared with women of other races/ethnicities, 2) the number of births to Hispanics in California increased during 1993-2003, and 3) Hispanics accounted for nearly 52 percent of all births in California in 2005.

The report authors concluded that the development of additional targeted and evidence-based public health interventions for increasing folic acid intake among these populations is needed.

For more information on folic acid, please visit, please visit [Natural Standard's Foods, Herbs & Supplements](#) database.

To comment on this story, please click [here](#) to enter the [Natural Standard](#) blog.

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## Natural Standard Launches 3 New Databases



**Natural Standard** has launched three new databases: Functional Foods, Vitamins & Minerals and Interactive Tools.

The Functional Foods database includes Professional, Bottom Line and Flashcard level monographs on hundreds of foods.

Find out all of the information you need to know on the safety and efficacy of hundreds of vitamins and minerals.

The new Interactive Tools database contains links to our: Interactions Checker, Symptoms Checker, Nutrition database, Calculators, Dictionary, Training Programs, Practitioner Database and Continuing Education opportunities.

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**Natural Standard** would like to wish all of its readers a happy and safe holiday season!

For healthy holidays, click on [www.naturalstandard.com](http://www.naturalstandard.com).

### Call for Papers

**Natural Standard**, new editor of the [Journal of Dietary Supplements](#), is accepting papers for upcoming issues. Please submit papers to [news@naturalstandard.com](mailto:news@naturalstandard.com).

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