“Decision Tree”
for evaluating and implementing an alternative or complementary therapy and/or any dietary supplements

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Questions, recommendations, and resources to consider before starting an alternative or complementary therapy. This is not an exclusive list, but a place to start being an “informed” consumer

Questions:

Define your goal(s). What are you hoping to achieve? What is the outcome you are looking for? Examples include but are not limited to: increased energy, increased blood cell counts, decreased nausea, reduced risk of cancer recurrence.

Is there scientific evidence that this therapy will reduce/eliminate your type/stage of tumors in humans? What is the strength of the evidence?

Is there any evidence that this therapy may be potentially harmful or interfere with your current conventional medical treatments or medications?

Is there evidence that this supplement or technique is harmless, or at the very least may increase my quality of life?

Instead of “supplementation”, is there a way to obtain the same (or better) result from food sources?

Define your budget! How much money are you willing to spend each day/month/year that is not covered or reimbursed by medical insurance?

Does this therapy feel “right” in your heart/gut? Do you feel comfortable with this therapy even if research is not yet complete?

How will you choose as a practitioner/therapist/healer? What are their qualifications and your comfort level with him or her?

Time considerations - “natural healing” takes time - are you willing to invest that time and effort and wait for healing?

Discuss this therapy with your oncologist or primary care physician.

Keep a diary/log of all supplements (what, dosage, frequency) and therapies initiated with subsequent changes noted. Again, share this information with your oncology health care team.
Recommendations:

- Read, Read, Read
- Ask “10,000 questions” (don’t be afraid to be the “pesky patient”)
- Never rely on only one source for information, especially if that source has a financial interest in the product

Resources for Information about Dietary Supplements or CAM:

- NaturalDatabase.com (effectiveness)
- ConsumerReportsMedicalGuide.org
- ConsumerLab.com (content)
- CancerNutritionInfo.com (S.Dixon, MPH, MS, RD)
- Consult an RD for individualization based on most current research

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