

FACTSHEET

This fact sheet is for education purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professionals to make sure this information is right for your child. If you would like to provide feedback on this fact sheet, please visit: www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/fact-sheets/feedback-form.

Making decisions about treatments in Spina Bifida

Making decisions about health care is an individual's right. The Spina Bifida team can help you gather information to help you make informed decisions about your child's healthcare.

Evidence Based Medicine (EBM)

The evolution of medicine means that the best treatments are available to children and their families. These changes give families the safest, most accurate and most clinically justified treatments.

EBM means that individual clinical skill is combined with the best available clinical evidence from systematic research. Evidence based treatments are proven to be safe and effective. They are used to diagnose Spina Bifida and treat associated complications. This type of treatment is often called mainstream or conventional medical treatment.

Complementary therapies and alternative therapies

Some families choose to explore complementary or alternative therapies. Many of these do not have clinical evidence to prove their benefits systematically. It is important to **always** speak to your treating team if additional therapies are being explored, trialled or used on a regular basis. Some complementary and alternative therapies impact on conventional treatments and full disclosure is important.

What are complementary therapies?

Complementary therapies may be used together with conventional medical treatments to support and enhance your child's quality of life and well-being. They do not aim to "cure" the person. Instead they are used to help control symptoms, such as pain or fatigue.

Complementary therapies include:

- Relaxation
- Meditation
- Visualisation
- Aromatherapy
- Reflexology
- Music therapy
- Art therapy
- Massage.

Some complementary therapies may not be recommended for people with Spina Bifida. Always talk to your doctor before starting any complementary therapy.

What are alternative therapies?

Alternative therapies are used instead of conventional medical treatments. Alternative therapies are often promoted as “cures” but they are unproven and have not been scientifically tested. They may cause harm or suffering to those who use them instead of conventional medical treatments.

Some examples of alternative therapies include:

- Naturopathy
- Homeopathy
- Chinese herbs
- Megavitamins.

Remember:

- Speak to your team about any additional therapies your child is having.
- Some additional therapies may cause harm.