

Considerations when using complementary therapies



It is important for residents, families, carers, doctors and staff to get a broad picture of all complementary and integrative medicines (CIMs) that residents could use to manage their pain and chronic conditions.

Before the resident starts a new complementary therapy, consider:

- Has the resident tried anything else to help with their pain?
- What are the risks and benefits of that CIM?
- What is the evidence to support the use of this type of CIM? Does the doctor know the evidence for the CIM?
- Is the CIM approach affordable or covered by private health insurance?

When the resident is already using a complementary therapy, consider:

- Do you know the risks and benefits of the CIM the resident is using?
- How have they been using the CIM, for how long and have they noticed any side effects?
- Why have they decided to use that particular CIM?
- What is their experience of using the CIM approach? How often would they use or perform the CIM?
- Do residents know information about their CIM therapist/practitioner?
- Do they know the evidence about the CIM approach they are using?

For further information on dietary or natural products, CIM and regulation in Australia, see Appendix 8 on pages 163-164.