



## Complementary & Integrative Medicine, Vaccine/Immunization

# The Flu Vaccine and Complementary and Alternative Medicine: Not a Great Pairing When It Comes to Increasing Vaccine Uptake

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Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is an area we all need to appreciate and learn about as much as we can—since prior studies in our journal and others show families turning to CAM for their children more than one might expect. When we do learn about the risks and benefits of a particular CAM therapy, we should be looking for the strength of evidence of that therapy to determine if it is safe to use in our patients.

Sadly even when we do this, we may not be appreciating the secondary risks of CAM in regard to families becoming more hesitant to use more conventional evidence-based therapies—vaccination being one of them.

To demonstrate this point, this week we are releasing a study by Bleser et al. ([10.1542/peds.2015-4664](#)) who used a national survey of 9000 children specifically asking about their use of CAM and whether influenza vaccine is given to a child who has used a variety of different CAM modalities—such as acupuncture, herbal supplements, chiropractic manipulation and others.

As you might expect, the more a child interfaces with a CAM modality, the less likely they are to receive a flu vaccine—yet not all modalities when stratified show this rolled-up result. This is a study you really need to read through to appreciate and in turn inquire even more with your patients and their families whether CAM may be playing a role in their vaccine hesitancy.

### Further Reading

- [Laser Acupuncture for Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome: A Randomized Controlled Trial](#)
- [Complementary and Conventional Medicine Use Among Youth With Recurrent Headaches](#)
- [Pediatrics on Instagram](#)
- [Pediatrics on Facebook](#)