



## How are Complaints Filed?

You can file a complaint online or obtain a complaint form under Quick Hits on the Committee home page at [www.naturopathic.ca.gov](http://www.naturopathic.ca.gov).

## Other Resources

The California Naturopathic Doctors Association is a professional association of naturopathic doctors in California. Contact information:

**California Naturopathic Doctors Association**  
1620 Broadway, Ste. D  
Santa Monica, CA 90404  
Phone: (310) 670-8100  
Fax: (815) 550-2411  
[www.calnd.org](http://www.calnd.org)

The American Association of Naturopathic Physicians is a national professional society representing licensed or licensable naturopathic physicians. Contact information:

**American Association of Naturopathic Physicians**  
300 New Jersey Ave. NW, Ste. 900  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
Phone: (202) 237-8150  
Fax: (541) 500-2256  
[www.naturopathic.org](http://www.naturopathic.org)



# A Consumer's Guide to Naturopathic Medicine



## Does Your Naturopathic Doctor Hold a Valid License?

Naturopathic doctors (ND) are primary care doctors. Like all other medical professionals, NDs are required to be licensed with the California Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA). Licensed NDs are regulated by DCA's Naturopathic Medicine Committee (Committee) that oversees standards of practice, complaints, and discipline.

It's important for consumers to verify a naturopathic doctor's license to make sure it is valid and in good standing before visiting the doctor.

You can verify an ND's license by using the DCA license search tool online at <https://search.dca.ca.gov>.

## What is a Naturopathic Doctor?

NDs must fulfill similar educational training as medical doctors or osteopathic doctors during their first two years of naturopathic medical school. They also must complete additional studies in holistic and nontoxic approaches to therapy with a strong emphasis on disease prevention, including vaccinations and optimizing wellness. Their scope of practice includes the following:

- Diagnose and treat symptoms by considering a holistic approach to whole-body wellness using safe and effective treatment plans.
- Recommend and dispense supplements to patients.
- Order diagnostic tests.
- All NDs are trained and educated in pharmacology. NDs who meet Committee requirements may, under physician supervision, prescribe Legend and Schedule IV through V controlled substances and prescribe Schedule III drugs under a patient-specific protocol checked by a supervising physician.
- Serve as a primary care doctor.

## Naturopathic Doctor vs. Naturopath: There is a Difference

**Licensed naturopathic doctors** are regulated through the Naturopathic Medicine Committee under DCA. A licensed ND is required to attend a four-year, graduate-level naturopathic medical school after completing a minimum of three years of undergraduate premedical studies. Naturopathic medical school includes training in anatomy, physiology, pathology, pharmacology, clinical nutrition, botanical medicine, and physical medicine. A rigorous professional examination is required prior to being licensed. NDs must meet continuing education requirements and practice ethically and professionally. Naturopathic corporations must carry malpractice insurance.

**Unlicensed naturopaths and homeopaths** practicing in California may not use the term "naturopathic doctor." Importantly, naturopaths and homeopaths are not required to receive the same level of education and training as licensed NDs. They also do not have the same privileges to diagnose and treat. They are required by law to disclose to clients, **in writing**, that they are providing **unlicensed** healing arts services. Naturopaths cannot receive a license if they do not attend a school on a list approved by the Naturopathic Medicine Committee and/or have not passed the national Naturopathic Physician Licensing Examination.





## California Naturopathic Medicine Committee



The Legislature established the Bureau of Naturopathic Medicine as part of DCA, which began licensing NDs in January 2005. The Bureau became the Naturopathic

Medicine Committee under the Osteopathic Medical Board of California in October 2009.

The Committee serves as a resource for California consumers who choose naturopathic doctors for their health care.

In addition to licensing, the Committee provides license status, investigates consumer complaints, and, if needed, pursues disciplinary actions against licensed NDs. Consumer protection is the Committee's highest priority.

Licensure ensures that naturopathic doctors have the required educational training, have passed the required examination(s), and have met ongoing education requirements that help them stay current with professional practice. Please visit the Committee's website for additional information at: [www.naturopathic.ca.gov](http://www.naturopathic.ca.gov).



## What is Naturopathic Medicine?

Naturopathic medicine is a distinct and comprehensive system of primary health care that uses natural methods and substances to support and stimulate the body's self-healing process. It is distinguished by the principles on which its practice is based. These principles include:

- 1. The Healing Power of Nature:** NDs trust in the body's inherent wisdom to heal itself.
- 2. Identify and Treat the Cause:** Look beyond the symptoms to effectively address the underlying cause(s) of illness.
- 3. First Do No Harm:** Seek to utilize the most natural, least invasive, and least toxic therapies first.
- 4. Doctor as Teacher:** The primary role of an ND is a teacher who educates and encourages people to take responsibility for their own health and to take steps to achieve and maintain optimal health.
- 5. Treat the Whole Person:** Total health includes physical, emotional, mental, genetic, environmental, social, spiritual, and other factors.
- 6. Prevention:** Encourage and emphasize disease prevention and focus on promoting health and wellness.

## How do I Find a Licensed Naturopathic Doctor?

You can access a list of licensed naturopathic doctors to check if their license is valid and view their public records (including license history and disciplinary actions) by accessing the DCA license search tool at <https://search.dca.ca.gov/>.

## Why Visit a Naturopathic Doctor?

If you are looking for any or all of the following:

- A primary health care provider.
- Treatment for acute or chronic conditions.
- A prevention-oriented holistic approach to your health.
- Someone to work in an integrated way with your current medical doctor.

Naturopathic medical care can benefit all Californians, from those looking for help with a specific health condition to those seeking to improve general health and wellness. NDs treat infants to senior citizens, people of all genders, and those in all stages of health and disease. Naturopathic medicine can benefit people who prefer a natural approach to their health care as well as those seeking integrated solutions to their health needs.



## Insurance Coverage for Naturopathic Care

More and more insurance companies are reimbursing and/or covering naturopathic medical services. Ask your carrier about coverage or reimbursement. If you have insurance that does not cover naturopathic medical care, use of a health savings account or flexible spending account may cover this care. Check with your employer to determine if one of these options is available to you.

