

# alive files

holistic healing



## Potent potassium

Increasing your intake of potassium—under the supervision of a health practitioner—can help decrease your blood pressure. It may also provide a protective benefit against kidney damage and strokes. Potassium helps maintain the pH balance of the body's fluids as well as nerve function.

People with high blood pressure are often given diuretics, causing them to excrete excess fluids and sodium. Unfortunately, this tends to flush out essential minerals like potassium as well. While potassium supplements should be used with caution because of the health risks of taking too much, potassium-rich foods are tasty and safe alternatives. These foods include apricots, whole grains, bananas, potatoes, and fish. Spinach or avocados are good choices too, as they're rich in magnesium, which allows the body to store potassium.

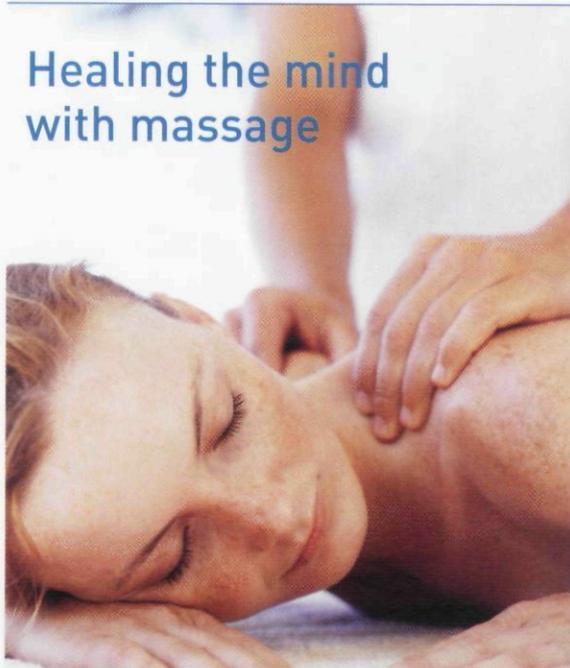
## Online info seekers beware

When it comes to using the Internet as a source for health-related information, it's important to exercise caution. A study of web-based information on herbal medicines, published in *Complementary Therapies in Medicine* in December 2004, gives some powerful reasons for healthy skepticism.

The most common problem with many of the websites is that they omit information. Particularly at commercial websites that sell products, these omissions tend to overemphasize the positive aspects. Many sites don't provide any scientific studies or books to support their claims. Some sites fail to mention possible side effects from using a product by itself or in conjunction with other treatments, either conventional or alternative.

The Internet provides vast amounts of useful information, but for medical conditions, it's best to consult with your professional health care practitioner.

## Healing the mind with massage



The Touch Institute of the University of Miami ([miami.edu/touch-research](http://miami.edu/touch-research)) has carried out numerous studies on the efficacy of massage therapy in treating a wide array of ailments. Many of them suggest that massage is helpful in recovering from or managing conditions ranging from carpal tunnel syndrome to diabetes.

Massage is also good for your mental health. In one study, teens diagnosed with attention deficit disorders exhibited reduced levels of both depression and anxiety after undergoing massage therapy. In another study, adults suffering from back pain reported experiencing less depression, anxiety, and stress after massage.

It appears that massage therapy may improve mental state by lowering cortisol levels (a stress hormone) and increasing serotonin levels (a mood-regulating hormone). Now you know why that rub-down leaves you feeling so happy.

More holistic healing information on page 56

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