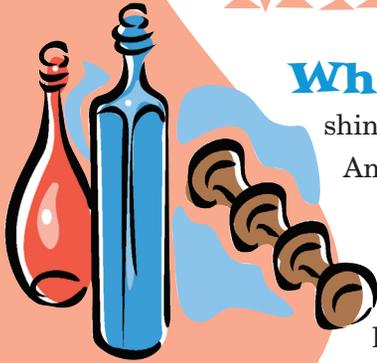


# Ways to Wellness™

## Integrative Medicine for Kids

### MASSAGE



**What's it about?** If you've ever stubbed your toe or gotten kicked in the shin, you know that you usually do two things right away. The first thing you do is yell. And the second thing you do is rub the sore spot until it stops hurting so much.

Without even thinking, we all know that rubbing usually makes certain body pains feel better. Why? Because pain often happens when muscles are too tight (the way your shoulders might feel after carrying a backpack all day) or when muscles have been bruised or injured (the way a stubbed toe feels). When muscles are tight or injured, blood doesn't flow into them smoothly. Rubbing helps move the blood back into those muscles, making them relax and feel better, and changes the way pain nerves work.

Basically, that's what massage is all about. It's a special kind of rubbing that relaxes your muscles and gets your blood to flow better into the parts of your body that feel tight or achy. Massage is usually helpful for kids who have headaches, stress, pain, and sleep problems.

**How does it work?** Not just anyone can do a good massage—at least, not without practice. For instance, try touching your friend's shoulder. Probably you can't tell if her muscles are tight or relaxed—but a Massage Therapist can tell right away. He or she will know just what kind of touch or pressure will work best to make the blood flow and muscles smooth out. Some will use stroking motions; others will tap on your muscles or press hard in one place. You can help the therapist by talking about what feels helpful and what doesn't.

**Mmmm...feels good!** Most massage sessions aren't just about touch. They're about making you feel calm all over, because the more your mind relaxes, the better your muscles relax. Sometimes therapists will play quiet music while you have your massage, or use special oils or pleasant smells to keep your mind and body in a nice, quiet place. You might even want to fall asleep!

Once you've had a few massage sessions, you may even want to learn to do some massage on your own. You'll find that it not only feels good to get a massage, but it feels good to give one, too. Your whole family can learn to do it for each other, and keep everybody in the house as healthy and relaxed as possible!



For more information call 612-813-7888  
**INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE CLINIC**  
**Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota**

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