Because young people are more sensitive and delicate than adults, many parents wish to spare their children treatment with potentially harsh medications, so they turn to natural medicine. However, this desire meets an opposing impulse: the fact that parents are worried about their children’s health and are less willing to experiment with treatments that may or may not help. The net effect for the parents is often increased anxiety about which course to take.

Other complications arise as well. For example, some treatments favored by natural medicine are particularly difficult for children to tolerate (such as restrictive diets) and use of them runs the risk of causing emotional harm. Furthermore, many alternative practitioners believe that immunizations are harmful for children and actively crusade against them, while conventional practitioners present vaccines as a matter of necessity.

Common sense, fortunately, suggests a way through this confusing situation: alternative medicine (especially in its gentler, more child-friendly forms) may be appropriate for relatively mild conditions, where there is not much risk of serious harm. Whenever there is risk of serious illness, however, medical diagnosis and treatment is preferable to the more speculative approaches of alternative medicine.

For a discussion of specific natural medicine issues of particular relevance to children, see the following articles:

- Attention Deficit Disorder
- Autism
- Bed-wetting
- Colic
- Ear Infection
- Eczema
- Hives
- Insect Bites
- Strep Throat
- Warts

For information on natural treatments of particular relevance to older children, see the full article on adolescent health.

References