



*“To cure disease after it has appeared is like digging a well when one already feels thirsty.”  
The Nei Jing*

## Introduction to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)

Chinese medicine is ancient system of healing that is at least 2,500 years old. It is accepted and in use by millions of people worldwide. The World Health Organization and the National Institutes of Health support the use of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

The United States is first in healthcare spending and 15<sup>th</sup> in life expectancy. The U.S. healthcare system is in need of more preventative, cost-effective options. Workplaces were projected to spend 2.2 trillion on healthcare costs in 2008. More workplaces are adding acupuncture and TCM as a health care benefit, and more acupuncturists are working in hospital settings.

### TCM

Holistic approach – all aspects of a person are treated  
Looks at patterns of disharmony for diagnosis and treatment  
Prescribes natural herbs  
Considers mental and emotional patterns as part of the condition/treatment

### Conventional

Reductive approach – treats discrete body components  
Looks at specific symptoms for diagnosis and treatment  
Prescribes synthetic pharmaceuticals  
Mental/emotional disorders treated separately

**Conditions Appropriate for Acupuncture Therapy** *(this list is not exhaustive – there are many more conditions that can be treated by acupuncture)*

<b>Digestive</b> Abdominal pain Constipation Diarrhea Hyperacidity Indigestion	<b>Emotional</b> Anxiety Depression Insomnia Nervousness Neurosis	<b>Eye-Ear-Nose-Throat</b> Cataracts Gingivitis Poor vision Tinnitus Toothache	<b>Gynecological</b> Infertility Menopausal symptoms Premenstrual syndrome
<b>Miscellaneous</b> Addiction control Blood pressure regulation Chronic fatigue Immune system tonification Stress reduction	<b>Musculoskeletal</b> Arthritis Back pain Muscle cramping Muscle pain/weakness Neck pain Sciatica	<b>Neurological</b> Headaches Migraines Bladder dysfunction Parkinson's disease Postoperative pain Stroke	<b>Respiratory</b> Asthma Bronchitis Common cold Sinusitis Smoking cessation Tonsillitis

Source: World Health Organization United Nations. "Viewpoint on Acupuncture."

## Chinese Medical Therapies

Traditional Chinese Medicine practices are intended to improve the flow of Qi and restore balance to the body. The scope and length of treatment depends on the severity of the condition or disease.

Acupuncture  
Chinese herbs  
Massage  
Diet therapy  
Movement/breathing exercises (Tai Chi, Chi Gong)

### Definitions

- ❖ **Acupuncture** – Acupuncture involves stimulation of anatomical locations on the skin with small gauge, sterile, flexible needles. Use of these acupuncture points taps into and redirects Qi to stimulate the body's natural healing process and promote physical and emotional well-being. Acupoints on the human body connect with pathways called channels or meridians and conduct Qi between the surface of the body and internal organs. Other direct manipulation techniques used along meridians to restore Qi flow are acupressure and moxibustion.
- ❖ **Channels/meridians** – a highly complex network that transports/directs Qi to every aspect of the body. There are 12 main and 8 secondary channels on the body.
- ❖ **Cupping** – a therapy that uses glass or plastic cups to create localized pressure by a vacuum. The suction from the cups can penetrate deep into tissues, causing a release of toxins. The vacuum inside the cups causes blood to form in the area of suction; this triggers the lymphatic system, clears the blood vessels, and releases toxins to promote healing in the area.
- ❖ **Gua sha** – involves stimulation of the skin by stroking a round-edged instrument that results in the appearance of small red dots called 'sha' that will fade in 2 to 3 days. Raising Sha promotes blood circulation and normal metabolic processes. Can be used for pain, stiffness, fever, chill, cough, nausea.
- ❖ **Holistic** – Describes therapies based on facts about the "whole person," including spiritual and mental aspects, not only the specific part of the body being treated. Holistic practitioners may advise changes in diet, physical activity, and other lifestyle factors to help treat a patient's condition.
- ❖ **Moxibustion:** The burning of a dried herb (mugwort) to provide a heat source to stimulate acupuncture points. Moxa comes in the form of a stick and has been compressed into a cigar-like roll that can be held directly over the body. It also comes in loose form that is rolled and placed directly on the body.
- ❖ **Qi** – The life force that animates the forms of the world and is the vital substance constituting the human body. The fundamental insight of Chinese medicine is that balanced and free-flowing qi results in health, while stagnant or imbalanced Qi leads to disease. The therapies of Chinese medicine keep the normal flow of energy unblocked to restore health to the body and mind.
- ❖ **Qi Gong** – Exercise forms that promote circulation of Qi within the body to enhance health. Translates as "Qi work." When you practice Qi Gong, you work with your life force.
- ❖ **Tuina** – A form of massage that uses rhythmic compression to affect Qi flow. Most often used to address musculoskeletal problems.
- ❖ **Yin and Yang** – Polar energies that represent the manifestation of all things in nature and the human body. Every object in the universe consists of two opposite aspects that are in continual fluctuation, interaction and transformation. The theory of yin and yang is used extensively in TCM to explain the structure, physiological function, and pathological changes of the human body, and to serve as guide for diagnosis of treatment, which seeks to restore the body's balance of Yin and Yang.