

About Acupuncture

Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) are used to ensure the free flow of the body's energy in order to bring the body into its natural balance.



Common Questions:

What can it do for me?

How does it work?

What conditions can be treated?

What is involved in a treatment?

What can Acupuncture & Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) do for me?

Acupuncture & TCM is for almost everyone. The best thing is that you don't have to be sick to benefit.

It is said by its practitioners to be an effective form of preventive medicine because it helps detect and treat energy imbalances before they lead to disease.

It can also treat specific disorders to relieve symptoms and help reduce complications and recurrence or can be used for the maintenance treatment of a long term problem, to help reduce the need for medication and surgery.

How does Acupuncture work?

The goal of acupuncture is to establish healthy body function by restoring the natural circulation of energy, or life force known in Chinese medicine as **Qi**. (This is pronounced as "chee" and is also commonly spelt as ch'i, chi or ki).

Qi is a fundamental concept of everyday Chinese culture, most often defined as "air" or "breath" and, by extension, "life force" or "spiritual energy" that is part of everything that exists.

The pathways through which this vital energy flows are known as **meridians**.

According to Chinese medical tradition, there's constant interchange between the **Qi** of the body and the **Qi** of the environment: external **Qi**, which can be good or harmful. Within the body, **Qi** is said to perform several functions, one of which is protection against harmful **Qi**. If this protective **Qi** is strong, it acts as a defence. If it is weak, resistance is lowered and you may become ill.

Along the body's meridians, there are over 500 **acupuncture points**. Good **Qi** is thought to be restored to these areas by stimulation for example with needles, although occasionally massage, herbs, or suction cups may be used on these points.

What conditions can Acupuncture & Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) treat?

The following is a comprehensive list of some of the conditions treatable by Acupuncture & TCM, as outlined by the World Health Organisation.

Diseases or disorders highlighted indicate that there is more in depth information available on this condition on Acupuncture.com.au

The diseases or disorders for which acupuncture therapy has been tested in controlled clinical trials reported in the recent literature can be classified into four categories as shown below.

1. Diseases for which acupuncture may be considered mainstream treatment: (Diseases, symptoms or conditions for which acupuncture has been proved through controlled trials-to be an effective treatment)

- Adverse reactions to radiotherapy and/or chemotherapy
- [Allergic rhinitis \(including hay fever\)](#)
- [Biliary colic](#)
- [Depression](#) (including depressive neurosis and depression following stroke)
- [Dysentery, acute bacillary](#)
- [Dysmenorrhoea, primary](#)
- Epigastralgia, acute (in peptic ulcer, acute and chronic gastritis, and gastrospasm)
- Facial Pain (including craniomandibular disorders)
- [Headache and Migraine \(**View detailed Acupuncture Q&A information**\)](#)
- [Hypertension, essential](#)
- Hypotension, primary
- Induction of labour
- Knee Pain
- Leukopenia
- [Low back Pain \(**View detailed Acupuncture Q&A information**\)](#)
- Malposition of fetus, correction of
- Morning sickness
- Nausea and vomiting
- [Neck Pain \(**View detailed Acupuncture Q&A information**\)](#)
- Pain in dentistry (including dental Pain and temporomandibular dysfunction)
- Periarthritis of shoulder
- Postoperative Pain
- Renal colic
- Rheumatoid arthritis

- Sciatica
- Sprain
- Stroke
- Tennis elbow

2. Diseases for which acupuncture is effective, but further proof is needed to include it into mainstream healthcare: (diseases, symptoms or conditions for which the therapeutic effect of acupuncture has been shown but for which further proof is needed)

- Abdominal Pain (in acute gastroenteritis or due to gastrointestinal spasm)
- Acne vulgaris
- Alcohol dependence and detoxification
- Bell's palsy
- Bronchial asthma ([View detailed Acupuncture Q&A information](#)) (most effective in children and in patients without complicating diseases)
- Cancer Pain
- Cardiac neurosis
- Cholecystitis, chronic, with acute exacerbation
- Cholelithiasis
- Competition stress syndrome
- Craniocerebral injury, closed
- Diabetes mellitus, non-insulin-dependent ([View detailed Acupuncture Q&A information](#))
- Earache
- Epidemic haemorrhagic fever
- Epistaxis, simple (without generalized or local disease)
- Eye Pain due to subconjunctival injection
- Female infertility ([View detailed Acupuncture Q&A information](#))
- Facial spasm
- Female urethral syndrome
- Fibromyalgia and fasciitis
- Gastrokinetic disturbance
- Gouty arthritis
- Hepatitis B virus carrier status
- Herpes zoster (human (alpha) herpesvirus 3)
- Hyperlipaemia
- Hypo-ovarianism
- Insomnia
- Labour Pain
- Lactation, deficiency

- Male sexual dysfunction, non-organic
- Ménière disease
- Neuralgia, post-herpetic
- Neurodermatitis
- Obesity
- Opium, cocaine and heroin dependence
- **Osteoarthritis (View detailed Acupuncture Q&A information)**
- Pain due to endoscopic examination
- Pain in thromboangiitis obliterans
- Polycystic ovary syndrome (Stein-Leventhal syndrome)
- Postextubation in children
- Postoperative convalescence
- **Premenstrual syndrome (View detailed Acupuncture Q&A information)**
- Prostatitis, chronic
- Pruritus
- Radicular and pseudoradicular Pain syndrome
- Raynaud syndrome, primary
- Recurrent lower urinary-tract infection
- Reflex sympathetic dystrophy
- Retention of urine, traumatic
- Schizophrenia
- Sialism, drug-induced
- Sjögren syndrome
- Sore throat (including tonsillitis)
- Spine Pain, acute
- **Stiff neck (View detailed Acupuncture Q&A information)**
- Temporomandibular joint dysfunction
- Tietze syndrome
- Tobacco dependence
- Tourette syndrome
- Ulcerative colitis, chronic
- Urolithiasis
- Vascular dementia
- Whooping cough (pertussis)

3. Diseases for which acupuncture is worth trying, because the treatment by western medicine is difficult: (Diseases, symptoms or conditions for which there are only individual controlled trials reporting some therapeutic effects, but for which acupuncture is worth trying because treatment by conventional and other therapies is difficult)

- Chloasma

- Choroidopathy, central serous
- Colour blindness
- Deafness
- Hypophrenia
- Irritable colon syndrome
- Neuropathic bladder in spinal cord injury
- Pulmonary heart disease, chronic
- Small airway obstruction

4. Diseases, symptoms or conditions for which acupuncture may be tried provided the practitioner has special modern medical knowledge and adequate monitoring equipment:

- Breathlessness in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Coma
- Convulsions in infants
- Coronary heart disease (angina pectoris)
- Diarrhoea in infants and young children
- Encephalitis, viral, in children, late stage
- Paralysis, progressive bulbar and pseudo bulbar

The following are other conditions Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine can treat which are not classified using the above system.

Acute sinusitis
 Common Cold
 Acute bronchitis
 Acute conjunctivitis
 Central retinitis
 Myopia (in children)
 Cataract (without complications)
 Toothache, post-extraction pain
 Gingivitis
 Acute and chronic pharyngitis
 Spasms of esophagus and cardia
 Hiccough
 Gastroptosis
 Acute and chronic gastritis
 Gastric hyperacidity
 Chronic duodenal ulcer (pain relief)
 Acute duodenal ulcer (without complications)
 Acute and chronic colitis
 Acute bacillary dysentery
 Constipation
 Diarrhea
 Paralytic ileus
 Trigeminal neuralgia
 Frozen shoulder
 Pareses following a stroke
 Sequelae of poliomyelitis (early stage, i.e., within six months)
 Meniere's disease
 Nocturnal enuresis

Intercostal neuralgia
Cervicobrachial syndrome

References:

World Health Organisation: Acupuncture: Review and Analysis of Reports on Controlled Clinical Trials 2002

What is involved in an Acupuncture & Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Treatment?



The initial consultation includes questioning on many things including your medical history, current medications and present day complaints.

This will be followed by the traditional pulse & tongue diagnosis where your the pulse on both your arms is taken along with a quick inspection of your tongue. This gives the practitioner a good indication of what is happening in your body.

Once the practitioner has acquired all this information from you they will then decide on a diagnosis and a treatment principal.

The treatment can usually last anywhere between 10-60 minutes depending on the practitioners diagnosis.

There are many different types of treatment methods available to the practitioner. Here are just some of the may options available that may be used during your treatment.

The five major treatment methods of TCM:

1. Acupuncture and Moxibustion



Needling - The inserting of fine needles into acupoints on your body.



Moxibustion (Moxa) - The use of the herb mugwort to heat acupoints.



Auricular Therapy - The use of fine intradermal needles on specific ear acupuncture points. The needles are covered in a tape and can be worn after your treatment for up to 3 days.

Electropuncture - The use of a small electric current used in conjunction with a needle for different manipulation of acupoints.

Laser Therapy - The use of laser light to stimulate acupuncture points. Great for children or for those not wanting needles.

2. Chinese Dietary Therapy

Specific foods have individual therapeutic properties. A particular food can be used not only to maintain health but also to contribute towards the treatment of a patient.

3. Chinese Herbal Medicine

The use of a herbal formula may be an option as part of treatment.

4. Exercise Therapy

Internal (Meditation, Qi Gong)

External (Qi Gong, Tai Chi, Martial Arts)

5. Manual Therapies

TCM remedial massage (Tuina, Shiatsu, Acupressure)

Cupping (Guan Fa)



Cupping - The use of glass suction cups placed on certain regions of the body.

Spooning (Gua Sha)