

Acupuncture & Arthritis

For many Americans of a certain age, arthritis is simply a fact of life. Does it really have to be that way?

In July 2006, the *Annals of Internal Medicine* published a German study on acupuncture and osteoarthritis of the knee demonstrating the effectiveness of acupuncture. Since then, many Americans have asked themselves, is acupuncture right for me?

A new perspective

What we in the West call arthritis is known as a “*bi* syndrome” in Chinese medicine. *Bi* means painful obstruction. When *qi* is obstructed instead of flowing smoothly through the body, there is pain. There are several types of *bi* categorized by their symptoms, but they all tend to settle in the joints. For example, people whose symptoms tend to be worse in damp weather have “damp *bi*”. People who have swollen, red joints (more common in rheumatoid arthritis) have “hot *bi*”. *Bi* syndromes include osteoarthritis as well as rheumatoid arthritis, gout and sciatica.

Root and Branch

In Chinese medicine we often speak of root and branch treatments. For arthritis, a branch treatment would consist of several needles in and around the affected joints, as well as

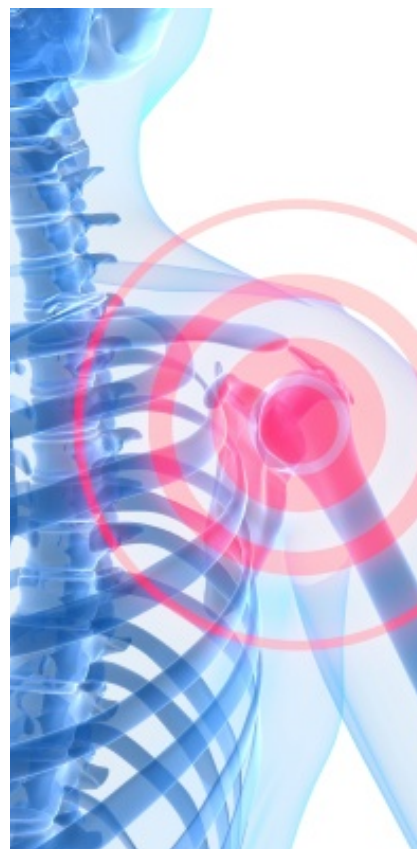
other major points along the channels that pass through the joint. The point of this treatment would be to open the channels and smooth the flow of *qi* and blood to alleviate pain.

Whenever possible, treatment should try to address the root of the problem as well its branch. What underlying disharmonies have allowed this obstruction to settle in and linger? Some might say the underlying disharmony is simply the aging process, and they would be correct to a certain degree because as we age our body tends to become more unbalanced. However, these disharmonies vary according to a person's constitutional tendencies and his or her lifestyle choices.

It's here that one really begins to appreciate the power of Chinese medicine. Rather than simply treat the pain, we treat the individual, strengthening his body to make the recurrence of pain less likely.

Fountain of Youth?

It would be grossly misleading for anyone to claim that acupuncture can completely reverse the effects of aging. However, it is responsible to state that most people suffering from osteoarthritis can have significant improvement in joint mobility and comfort, and that these improvements last for several months to years. Is acupuncture right for you? Schedule an appointment today. To learn more about acupuncture and pain relief, visit our website at www.wholefamilyacupuncture.com.



Ginger and Scallion Tea

For early onset of a cold with runny nose, sneezing and body aches**

5 round slices of ginger
3 scallions, chopped
2 cups boiling water

Steep ingredients in boiling water for 10 minutes. Strain and serve with honey. Leftover tea may be refrigerated and reheated.



**Take this tea as soon as you feel you are coming down with a cold. It is best to take it in the evening, then wrap up in warm blankets and go to sleep. You are trying to sweat out the cold. This tea is not suitable for a person with a high fever.



TCM Dietary Therapy: A Superior Medicine

In the history of Chinese medicine, a doctor was considered to be truly superior if he treated patients with food. Only an inferior doctor resorted to herbal medicine. Why was this? Because the superior doctor treated a patient before any underlying imbalance could develop into full-blown illness. By changing a person's diet, he could restore harmony to the body.

Chinese dietary therapy is a fully developed branch of medicine, with its own wisdom and recipes. This is preventive medicine at its best. Whether you suffer from frequent colds, headaches, insomnia, edema (the list goes on) there are foods that can help you feel better. Treat yourself naturally!

For further reading I suggest the following books:

Healing with Whole Foods by Bob Flaws. This book provides a nice introduction to Chinese dietary therapy.

A Spoonful of Ginger: Irresistible, health-giving recipes from Asian kitchens by Nina Simonds. Simonds is an accomplished cookbook writer. Her recipes are easy to follow and very tasty.

Both these books are available from our "Lending Library" at Whole Family Health.