



March/April 2005

Volume 3 Number 2

## UNDERSTANDING ACUPUNCTURE

Acupuncture use has grown significantly in the United States. According to the 2002 National Health Interview Study, more than 8 million adults reported using acupuncture, and 2 million adults had used acupuncture in the previous year. This survey was the largest to date to assess the use of complementary and alternative medicine.

As more Americans use acupuncture as part of their health care, it's important to understand acupuncture and how it may contribute to healing.

### Acupuncture Theories

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) theorizes that more than 2,000 acupuncture points on the human body connect with 12 main pathways and eight secondary pathways, called meridians. TCM practitioners believe these meridians conduct energy, or Qi, between the surface of the body and internal organs.

Qi regulates spiritual, emotional, mental and physical balance. Qi is influenced by the opposing forces of Yin and Yang.

According to TCM, when Yin and Yang are balanced, they work together with the natural flow of Qi to help the body achieve and maintain health. Acupuncture is believed to balance Yin and Yang, keep the normal flow of energy unblocked and restore health to the body and mind.

Other TCM practices intended to improve the flow of Qi include acupuncture, herbs, diet, massage and meditative physical exercises.

Western scientists have found meridians hard to identify because meridians do not directly correspond to nerve or blood circulation pathways. Some researchers believe that meridians are located throughout the body's connective tissue, while others do not believe that Qi exists at all. Such differences of opinion have made acupuncture a source of scientific controversy.

### Applying Acupuncture

Several processes have been proposed to explain acupuncture's effects, primarily those on pain. Acupuncture points are believed to stimulate the central nervous system to release chemicals into the muscles, spinal cord and brain. These chemicals either change the experience of pain or release other chemicals, such as hormones, that influence the body's self-regulating systems. The biochemical changes may stimulate the body's natural healing abilities and promote physical and emotional well-being. There are three main mechanisms of action:

#### 1. Conduction of electromagnetic signals:

Western scientists have found evidence that acupuncture points are strategic conductors of electromagnetic signals. Stimulating points along these pathways through acupuncture enables electromagnetic signals to be relayed at a greater rate than under normal conditions. These signals may start the flow of pain-killing biochemicals, such as endorphins, and of immune system cells to specific sites in the body that are injured or vulnerable to disease.

2. **Activation of pain reducing systems:** Research has found that several types of pain-reducing chemicals in the body (opioids) may be released into the central nervous system during acupuncture, thereby reducing pain.

3. **Changes in brain chemistry, sensation and involuntary body functions:** Studies have shown that acupuncture may alter brain chemistry in a good way by changing the release of neurotransmitters and neurohormones. Acupuncture also has been documented to affect the parts of the central nervous system related to sensation and involuntary body functions, such as immune reactions and processes that regulate a person's blood pressure, blood flow and body temperature.



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### Clinical Studies

According to a National Institutes of Health panel of scientists, researchers and practitioners, clinical studies have shown that acupuncture is an effective treatment for nausea caused by surgical anesthesia and cancer chemotherapy, as well as for dental pain experienced after surgery. The panel also found that acupuncture is useful by itself or combined with conventional therapies to treat many conditions, from headaches to asthma.

Increasingly, acupuncture is complementing conventional therapies. For example, doctors may combine acupuncture and drugs to control surgery-related pain in their patients. By providing both acupuncture and conventional anesthetic drugs, doctors have helped some patients achieve a state of complete pain relief. They have also found that using acupuncture lowers the need for conventional pain-killing drugs, reducing the risk of side effects for the patients who take drugs.

The World Health Organization lists more than 40 conditions for which acupuncture can be used. See table below.



<b>DIGESTIVE</b>	<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	<b>RESPIRATORY</b>
Abdominal Pain	Addiction control	Asthma
Constipation	Athletic performance	Bronchitis
Diarrhea	Blood pressure regulation	Common cold
Hyperacidity	Chronic fatigue	Sinusitis
Indigestion	Immune system tonification	Smoking cessation
<b>EMOTIONAL</b>	Stress reduction	Tonsillitis
Anxiety		
Depression	<b>MUSCULOSKELETAL</b>	<b>For more information,</b>
Insomnia	Arthritis	<b>contact Cynthia Ista,</b>
Nervousness	Back pain	<b>L.Ac., RN, 612-863-4614.</b>
Neurosis	Muscle cramping	
<b>EYE-EAR-NOSE- THROAT</b>	Muscle pain/weakness	
Cataracts	Neck pain	
Gingivitis	Sciatica	
Poor vision	<b>NEUROLOGICAL</b>	
Tinnitus	Headaches	
Toothache	Migraines	
<b>GYNECOLOGICAL</b>	Neurogenic	
Infertility	Bladder dysfunction	
Menopausal symptoms	Parkinson's disease	
Premenstrual syndrome	Postoperative pain	
	Stroke	



## BOOST CANCER DEFENSES WITH NUTRIENT-RICH DIET

Most experts can agree that nutrition is important to maintaining good health. In recent years, the effect of nutrition on diseases like cancer has gained more attention. As with other diseases, cancer is best fought with prevention. Mounting scientific evidence supports the link between diet and cancer prevention. Using nutrition to strengthen the body's own natural defenses has become a centerpiece of cancer prevention. These guidelines can boost your defenses against cancer:

- ❖ Eat foods containing anti-inflammatory agents such as omega-3 fatty acids, found in flaxseed and fish oil.
- ❖ Reduce sugar intake since it can weaken the immune system and add empty calories to your diet.
- ❖ Avoid animal products that include added hormones.
- ❖ Use products from naturally raised plants and animals. Avoid pesticides and herbicides as they can overburden the body.
- ❖ Eat plenty of high fiber foods, including whole grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables. These foods encourage proper elimination of toxins through the colon.
- ❖ Eat foods that help the body detoxify, including Brussels sprouts, broccoli, kale, cauliflower, oranges, tangerines, lemons, limes, red grapes, apples and cherries, onions, garlic and green tea.

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# WASIE CORNER

## News from the Wasie Fitness Center

### FAMILY FITNESS

The latest government guidelines on exercise recommend that adults get 30 minutes of physical activity daily, while children should get 60 minutes of activity. Here are tips for meeting these guidelines as a family.

#### Getting Started

- ❖ Schedule a regular time for the family to do physical activity.
- ❖ Take turns selecting activities such as biking, swimming or going for a walk. Remember, the more convenient the activity, the more likely you will be to take part in it.
- ❖ Make sure the activities are suitable for the entire family. The activity should be enjoyable regardless of age, ability or level of fitness.
- ❖ Identify indoor and outdoor areas where children can tumble and roll around.
- ❖ Limit time spent sitting in front of the television or computer.
- ❖ Don't assume that you have to spend money to be more active.



#### Making Fitness Fun

- ❖ Variety is the key to making your family fitness program enjoyable.
- ❖ Head to the park for a game of tag, visit the zoo or play a round of miniature golf.
  - ❖ Go to a swimming pool or lake where you can play water volleyball, basketball, underwater tag or have races.
- ❖ Keep activities fun rather than competitive.
- ❖ Host birthday parties and other special events at parks, swimming pools or gyms.
- ❖ When the weather is bad, move your activity indoors. Take a stroll through the local mall or museum.
- ❖ Purchase toys or equipment that promote physical activity.
- ❖ Don't make fitness a chore. Keep it light and enjoyable.

With the number of overweight children and adults on the rise, it is important to find time for fitness in your daily life. Taking part in physical activity as a family is a good way for children to try different activities and learn what activities they can enjoy for a lifetime.



### BOOST CANCER DEFENSES WITH NUTRIENT-RICH DIET

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- ❖ Increase intake of antioxidant nutrients such as selenium and vitamins C and E to protect cells from damage.
- ❖ Eat frequently and do not skip meals.
- ❖ Think about the foods you eat and how they may benefit or harm you.

Scientific research provides a glimpse into the potential of food to be "chemoprotective," or to protect against cancer. Unquestionably, a nutrient-filled diet can be a powerful step toward cancer prevention. Also, nutritional recommendations aimed

at fighting cancer apply to the prevention of a host of other diseases.

For more information, contact Carolyn Denton, MA, LN, 612-863-6259 or [carolyn.denton@allina.com](mailto:carolyn.denton@allina.com).





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INSTITUTE FOR  
HEALTH AND HEALING

**March/April  
2005**

## INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND HEALING: **MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

Registration is required for all classes unless otherwise noted. To register or for more information, call 612-863-3333.

### *Special Events*

#### **The Power of Reflection**

- ❖ Tuesday, March 15, 7-8:30 p.m.
- ❖ \$25

#### **Sacred Movement: Unfolding Transformation from the Inside Out**

- ❖ Thursday, March 3, 7-9 p.m. and Tuesday, April 19, 7-9 p.m.
- ❖ \$35

### *Series Programs*

#### **Yoga for Beginners**

- ❖ Thursdays starting March 31, 5-6:15 p.m.
- ❖ \$59

#### **Keeping a Visual Journal**

- ❖ Mondays in April, starting April 4, 7-9 p.m.
- ❖ \$120 (includes materials)
- ❖ pre-registration deadline April 28

#### **Introduction to Traditional Herbalism**

- ❖ Thursdays, April 7 and 14, 7-9 p.m.
- ❖ \$30

#### **Introduction to Running**

- ❖ Thursdays in April, starting April 7, 4-5 p.m.
- ❖ No charge

### *One-Time Classes*

#### **Nutritional Management and Support for Menopause**

- ❖ Tuesday, March 8, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- ❖ No charge

#### **Supporting Infertility Treatment with Acupuncture**

- ❖ Thursday, March 10, 7-8:30 p.m.
- ❖ No charge

#### **Introduction to Foot Massage and Reflexology**

- ❖ Monday, March 14, 4-7 p.m.
- ❖ \$55

#### **Feng Shui and Your Health**

- ❖ Thursday, March 17, 6:30-9 p.m.
- ❖ \$27

#### **Welcoming Spring — A Healing Arts Special Evening**

- ❖ Monday, March 21, 7-9 p.m.
- ❖ \$30 (includes materials)
- ❖ pre-registration deadline March 14

#### **Spring Cleaning for Your Body**

- ❖ Tuesday, April 5, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- ❖ No charge