

What is Traditional Chinese Medicine?

Developed over the past 5,000 years, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is a complex, whole-healing medical system based on the principle that the functioning of the body is controlled by a vital force or energy called "Qi" (pronounced "chee"). According to TCM, Qi flows throughout the body, between organs and along pathways called "meridians." The status of one's Qi depends on the delicate balance of two opposing energies: Yin - the nourishing, moistening, cooling aspect and Yang - the energetic, hot, and motivational energy. In the Chinese system of medicine, illness or disease is caused by deficiencies or excesses of energy flowing through a specific area of the body, resulting in an unbalanced state of being. TCM utilizes a variety of techniques to restore harmony and balance to the body, mind, and spirit to maintain total wellness.

Traditional Chinese Medicine practices include:

- [Acupuncture](#)
- [Acupressure](#)
- [Cupping](#)
- [Electro-stimulation](#)
- [Gua Sha](#)
- [Herbal medicine](#)
- [Magnets](#)
- [Moxibustion](#)
- [Tui Na](#) (Chinese Massage)

A visit to a traditional Chinese medicine practitioner begins with observation and conversation. The practitioner will observe your gait, the way you carry your body, your tone of voice, and the brightness of your eyes, in addition to conducting an examination of your tongue and pulses. Your practitioner will also take a detailed history, discussing your family, living environment, habits, diet, emotions, sleep, exercise, as well as respiratory, digestive, and reproductive health. If appropriate for women, your menstrual cycle and child-bearing history will also be discussed. Many people are surprised at the depth of conversation and careful observation they experience with a TCM practitioner. Each question and observation is a tool to help the practitioner gain insight into the unique pattern of your life energy - all to assess balance and imbalance, all without using one instrument.

What Conditions Can Traditional Chinese Medicine Treat?

Conditions that have responded well to Traditional Chinese Medicine include:

- AIDS
- Arthritis
- Asthma
- Auto immune disorders
- Cancer/tumors/cysts/fibroids
- Cardiac disease
- Chronic pain (including neck , back, facial, muscular, and shoulder pain)
- Circulatory disorders
- Common cold/sore throat
- Digestive disorders/diarrhea
- Emotional imbalances
- Fatigue
- Fertility concerns
- Fibromyalgia
- Genitourinary problems
- Headaches/migraines
- Hypotension/hypertension
- Insomnia
- Menstrual disorders/menopausal syndromes
- Nausea
- Neurological disorders including stroke and head injury.
- Prostatitis
- Sexual dysfunction/impotence
- Smoking cessation
- Stress/anxiety/depression
- Trauma Pain
- Weight loss

Traditional Chinese Medicine is also used to maintain good health and prevent onset of disease.

When Should I Avoid Traditional Chinese Medicine?

- Acute trauma or emergency situations
- Tui Na is not used for conditions involving compound fractures, external wounds, open lesions, or with infectious conditions
- Tui Na should not be performed on the abdominal portion of a women during pregnancy or menstruation
- Tui Na is not used for treatment of malignant tumors or tuberculosis
- Some herbs should be avoided during pregnancy

How Can I Find Out More About Traditional Chinese Medicine?

To find out more about Traditional Chinese Medicine including acupuncture, herbal medicine and massage, or to [schedule an appointment](#) with one of our practitioners, contact the Raby Institute at 312-276-1212 or info@rabyinstitute.com.

Traditional Chinese Medicine Practices

Acupressure

Acupressure is a manual, non-invasive way to stimulate the same energy points as acupuncture along meridian lines of the body. The practitioner activates and aims to correct imbalances by pressing firmly on the body at the desired energetic locations. This method of treatment is an excellent alternative for needle-sensitive individuals, pediatric care and for individuals to learn how to continue self-care after treatments.

Chinese Acupuncture

An imbalance, or blockage of the body's energy may result in physical, emotional or stress-related disease or pain. Acupuncture seeks to restore proper energy flow through the body by stimulating key acupuncture points along meridian lines using sterile, ultra-thin, disposable needles inserted under the skin. The stimulation created by the strategically placed acupuncture needles encourages natural energy flow to resume, breaking through blockages and restoring balance to the body's energetic systems to promote healing and fortify the body's immune response.

Chinese Herbal Medicine

Chinese Herbal Medicine is used in conjunction with acupuncture to support the healing process. Chinese herbs have an effect on both the body's biochemistry and specific body systems. Herbal formulas are often complex, multi-herb formulations tailored to meet the specific needs of each individual.

Cupping

Cupping is a technique in which glass cups are heated from the inside using fire to create a vacuum and then placed on the body. It is said to help improve blood and energy circulation, to 'open' the lungs to improve breathing, draw out toxins, cold, wind or damp in the body. Cupping can be effective for a wide range of ailments, including asthma, dull aches and pains, indigestion, swellings, low back pain, etc.

Electro-stimulation

Commonly used for acute pain situations, 'e-stim' provides a low level of electrical stimulation to acupuncture points to open up blockages in the movement of blood and energy in the body. According to Traditional Chinese Medicine, pain is typically due to 'stuck' blood or energy, so encouraging and maintain proper flow can provide relief from many types of pain. E-stim is also popularly used in the treatment of neurological diseases, including chronic pain, spasm and paralysis.

Gua Sha

Gua Sha is an ancient therapeutic practice that began in China centuries ago. 'Gua' means to scrape or rub. 'Sha' is a reddish, elevated skin rash. Using a special spoon-like tool, it is applied primarily on the back, neck, shoulders and limbs of the body. It is used to treat and prevent acute conditions such as common cold or flu, asthma, bronchitis as well as chronic problems involving pain and congestion of the energy and blood.

Magnets

Magnet therapy is another non-invasive treatment option that uses tiny magnets under adhesive bandages that pull energy to and activate certain acupuncture points. Practitioners place the magnets either on the body or in the ear. Popular magnet therapy uses are for nausea during pregnancy and cancer treatment, among others.

Moxibustion

Moxibustion is a Chinese medicine therapy that involves burning the herb Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*) over certain energy points or channels on the body. Resembling a non-smokable cigar, when lit and burned over acupuncture points the heat from moxibustion stimulates circulation through the points and induces a smoother flow of blood and energy. Practitioners consider this to be especially useful in the treatment of chronic or 'deficient' conditions.

Tui Na

Tui Na, literally translating into "push-grasp" or "poke-pinch," is a form of Asian bodywork that closely resembles Western therapeutic massage. The massage technique uses a series of pressing, tapping, and kneading motions with the palms, fingertips, knuckles, or massage tools along the energy channels of the body to help remove blockages and restore the balanced flow of Qi. While Tui Na provides benefits similar to those of Western massage, including relaxation, stimulation of blood flow and alleviation of muscle and joint tension or pain, Tui Na is more specifically therapeutic. Using energetic principles similar to acupuncture, practitioners can focus Tui Na treatments on correcting and preventing specific problems, especially chronic pain associated with the muscles, joints, and skeletal system, by encouraging proper energy flow and balance.