

Your first visit for Chinese Medicine:

Your first visit will begin with an in-depth assessment of your overall condition and an initial treatment. The intake and treatment will take up to one-and-a-half hours. Typical follow-up treatments are shorter depending on the condition. During the assessment I may ask you about your emotions, sleeping patterns, and eating habits to determine the specific cause of the chief complaint. Chinese medicine considers the whole person, not just one isolated symptom. When viewed together, the myriad of symptoms and signs you are experiencing reveal patterns of disharmony. Although treatment will focus on your chief complaint, your whole being must be considered in order to develop the most appropriate course of treatment. One of the strengths of holistic medicine (Chinese Medicine) is that it appreciates that each individual has entirely different background, genealogy, and life experience that relate to reasons you are seeking balance in your life. Acupuncture seeks to return the body to homeostatic balance by inserting needles in the body in areas that positively stimulate the lymphatic, vascular and neural pathways in the body.

Pulse, Tongue and Abdominal Diagnosis

As part of your intake, viewing your tongue and palpating your pulse can provide an Oriental Medical practitioner with a wide variety of information to guide the treatment. The tongue is a microcosm of the human body, and its shape, color, markings, and coating have significance. The pulse reveals the current energy patterns of twelve different organ systems and any imbalances that exist in their relationships to each other.

Treatment

A typical treatment in the Chinese tradition includes **Acupuncture, Moxabustion, Structural Adjustment and Massage**, to the accompaniment of soothing music.

Acupuncture treatment utilizes disposable, hair-thin needles, needle insertions, and intuitive sensing of Qi (energy) movement by the practitioner, all of which provide for a very gentle and relaxing experience. This style of treatment is especially preferred by highly sensitive people, fibromyalgia patients, and persons with environmental sensitivities. Needles are typically retained for about 15-40 minutes depending on the patient and the condition.

Moxabustion, the application of heat to acupoints using specially prepared forms of Artemisia (mugwort) herbs, is used extensively in Chinese Medicine. Its effects are highly nourishing and helpful in restoring vigor to organic functions that have become depleted.

Structural Adjustment and Massage (called Tuina in China; the Chinese Tuina doctors are similar to the Chiropractors in the US) involves techniques to align the skeletal structure as well as massage to move nutrients, blood and oxygen into the affected muscles, and to provide relaxation for the whole body.

After Your Treatment

Relief is often immediate; for some individuals, it can be delayed by a few hours or even one day. Improvement might last for a few hours on the first visit and then last longer with each successive treatment. OR, relief may last from the first treatment until your next visit. It is important to recognize that we are all individuals with varying responses to treatment. Factors such as constitutional strength, depth and duration of illness, number of prescription medications taken, and psychological well-being can also have an impact on how quickly improvement proceeds. In a few cases, less than 10%, a few individuals may actually feel an aggravation of their symptoms before getting better. This is typically seen as a "healing breakthrough" and the patient should contact Vital Health Center if the condition lasts more than 24hours.

Course of Treatment

As part of your first visit, I will discuss with you a proposed course of treatment. Because individuals vary, it is difficult to state definitively at the time of your first visit how many treatments will be required. In general, acute conditions of recent onset may only require two or three treatments. Chronic conditions usually require more treatments to achieve sustained results. With chronic conditions I usually recommend an initial course of four treatments in order to better assess the extent to which acupuncture will help the condition.

The ideal approach to illness is to begin treatment as soon as possible. The sooner you seek help, the easier it is to treat. For longstanding illnesses, weekly treatments may be required for some time in order to achieve a sustained return to wellness. As part of your course of treatment, I might make recommendations regarding herbal medicine, diet, and lifestyle. These are customized to your case and derive from the holistic medical philosophy of treating the whole person. The more consistently you are able to follow through with these recommendations, the better the results you will achieve.

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