

Let's Talk About...

Traditional Chinese Medicine

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) includes many different practices. It has been used to diagnose, treat, and prevent illness for more than 5,000 years. Its philosophy is rooted in Chinese writings and family practices passed down from generation to generation. Today, TCM and Western medicine are practiced together in many hospitals and clinics throughout the world.

In TCM, the body is a whole where the parts of the body have separate jobs but work together. TCM practitioners believe there is a life force or energy, called qi (pronounced "chee"), that flows throughout the body in energy pathways called meridians.

The goal of TCM treatments is to regulate and encourage the proper flow of qi through the body. When qi flows easily and undisturbed, the body functions well. When the qi is blocked, stagnant, or over stimulated the body enters a stressed state or disease state.

How does TCM work?

Picture a free flowing river (meridian). As rocks, sticks and branches enter the river the water gets choppy and disordered. If there are too many rocks, sticks and branches in the water, the river can dam up and the water pools and stagnates. Qi flows in the body like water flows down a river. Internal and external stresses are like the rocks, sticks, and branches. Some stress is OK. When the body gets overloaded, the qi gets choppier and chaotic. If the qi dams up completely, it can lead to major health problems.

TCM practitioners use tools, needles, and herbs to get the qi moving, release the dams, and regulate the flow of qi through the body's meridians.

What are the different kinds of TCM treatment?

- **Acupuncture:** hair-thin needles are inserted into acupuncture points on the acupuncture meridians.
- **Acupressure:** fingers or small tools are pressed on the acupuncture points on the acupuncture meridians.
- **Acutonics:** a tuning fork is placed on the acupuncture points on the acupuncture meridians.
- **Cupping:** small suction cups are placed on acupuncture points on the acupuncture meridian.
- **Shoni Shin:** special TCM tools are placed on the meridians to stimulate or relax.
- **Gua Sha:** the skin is rubbed or scraped with special TCM tools.
- **Tui Na:** gentle and fluid body movements. This encourages proper qi flow through the body.
- **Qi Gong:** specific movements by the child or practitioner that move energy through the patient's body.
- **Chinese Herbal Medicine:** custom teas or patented formulas prescribed for patients. These help balance the body's chemistry and promote healing.