



Ondol
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Moxibustion

Moxibustion is a traditional Chinese medicine technique that involves the burning of *mugwort*, a special tinder of dried herbs, on or near the skin to facilitate healing. It has been used throughout Asia for more than 3.000 years and was first practiced in cold climates to generate warmth or in the treatment of pain.

The word *moxa* derives from Japanese mogusa, which literally means 'burning of mugwort'.

The purpose of moxibustion, as with most forms of traditional Chinese medicine, is to strengthen the blood, stimulate the flow of Qi, and maintain general health.

There are two types of moxibustion: *direct* and *indirect*.

In *direct* moxibustion, a small cone-shaped amount of moxa is placed on top of an acupuncture point and lit, but is extinguished or removed before it burns the skin. The patient will experience a pleasant heating sensation that penetrates deep into the skin, but should not experience any pain, blistering or scarring.

In *indirect* moxibustion, a practitioner lights one end of a moxa stick, roughly the shape and size of a cigar, and holds it close to the area being treated for several minutes until the area turns warm and red. Another form of indirect moxibustion uses both acupuncture needles and moxa. A needle is inserted into an acupoint and retained. The tip of the needle is then wrapped in moxa and ignited, generating heat to the point and the surrounding area. After the desired effect is achieved, the moxa is extinguished and the needle(s) removed.

In Oriental medicine, moxibustion is applied on people who have a cold or *stagnant* condition. The burning of moxa expels cold and warms the meridians, which leads to a smoother flow of blood and *Qi*. In Western medicine, moxibustion is possibly best known for its success in *turning breech babies* into a normal head-down position prior to childbirth by applying heat to the Bladder meridian.

However, moxibustion is also indicated in a range of other acute and chronic conditions such as:

- Fertility issues
- Pregnancy support
- Irregular and/or painful menstruation
- Weak immunity
- Asthma, common colds, sinus problems
- Arthritis and other joint problems
- Digestive dysfunctions
- Chronic tiredness/low energy

It is often used in combination with acupuncture to enhance the therapeutic effect of the treatment.