

# Acupuncture is an alternative to drugs

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Acupuncture is part of an integrated system of primary health care, known as Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) that has an uninterrupted history of development dating back thousands of years in China and other parts of East Asia.

The origins of acupuncture in China can be traced back at least two thousand years, making it one of the oldest and most long-standing health care systems in the world. Today, acupuncture is an effective, natural and increasingly popular form of health care that is being used by people from a wide range of cultural and social backgrounds.

Acupuncture takes a wholistic approach to understanding normal function and disease processes and focuses as much on the prevention of illness as on the treatment. When healthy, an abundant supply of *qi* (pronounced chee) or "life energy" flows through the body's meridians (a network of invisible channels through the body). If the flow of *qi* in the meridians becomes blocked or there is an inadequate supply of *qi*, then the body fails to maintain harmony, balance and order, and disease or illness follows. This can result from stress, overwork, poor diet, disease pathogens, weather and environmental conditions, and other lifestyle factors and becomes evident to TCM practitioners through observable signs of bodily dysfunction.

Acupuncture treatment involves the insertion of fine, sterile needles into specific sites (acupuncture points) along the body's meridians to clear energy blockages and encourage the normal flow of *qi* through the individual.

The practitioner may also stimulate the acupuncture points using other methods, including moxibustion, cupping, laser therapy, electro-stimulation and massage, in order to re-establish the flow of *qi*. As a natural form of healing, acupuncture has the following benefits:

- provides drug-free pain relief
- effectively treats a wide range of acute and chronic ailments
- treats the underlying cause of disease and illness as well as the symptoms
- provides an wholistic approach to the treatment of disease and illness, linking body, mind and emotions

For more information contact Australian Acupuncture & Chinese medicine Association Ltd on 1300 725 334 or visit [www.acupuncutre.org.au](http://www.acupuncutre.org.au).