

Cancer Answers

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ancient wisdom, modern merit Acupuncture offers present-day relief of symptoms and side effects

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- a Cancer Treatment Centers for America quarterly publication
check them out online at www.cancercenter.com

Traditional Chinese medicine views the human body as a balance between two opposing forces: yin and yang. The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine describes *yin* as "the cold, slow, passive principle" and *yang* as "the hot, excited or active principle". Simply put, in Chinese medicine, health is achieved when these forces are in balance and illness occurs when they are imbalanced.

Acupuncture is traditionally used to correct energy flow, which is interrupted, or "blocked," by an imbalance. This is done by stimulating specific acupuncture points on the body. Each organ is ascribed an absolute pathway: these pathways are called *meridians*. The acupuncture points reside on these meridians. These points are commonly stimulated with needles, though other methods such as *acupressure* (applying physical pressure to acupuncture points) exist - to correct and reestablish energy flow and stimulate the body's natural healing abilities.

In cancer treatment the American Cancer Society has already recognized acupuncture as an alternative pain management technique. Recent research indicating that acupuncture may help relieve side effects of cancer treatment includes a 2008 study suggesting that the practice may help manage pain and dysfunction in patients with head and neck cancer as well as a 2005 study suggesting the potential of acupuncture to relieve chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting.

Acupuncturist Dorion Simmons says he has seen great responses in pain management and sees acupuncture as having many cancer-related applications. "We use it for many reasons, including fatigue, nausea and vomiting, headache, upset stomach and other aches and pains." Acupuncture can be incorporated into a treatment plan just as other forms of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) are - "just like nutrition, naturopathy and rehabilitation services, including physical, occupational, speech and chiropractic therapies," Simmons explains.

Acupuncture can be very safe, but, as with other forms of CAM, potential complications exist. An important step in reducing the risk of complications is to seek treatment only from a qualified acupuncture practitioner who has completed proper training.

It is important that patients ALWAYS discuss acupuncture - and all forms of CAM - with their primary care providers before beginning treatment. Surgical or radiation sites must be assessed to determine their suitability for acupuncture. If a site cannot be needled, it's possible to deliver safe, effective treatments while avoiding sites with complications. Simmons explains, "we don't have to go directly to those sites to bring about change."

Cancer resources for families and kids

The Wellness Community provides support, education, and hope for people with cancer at more than 100 locations worldwide, including 24 US-based and two international centers, with 73 satellite and offsite programs and online. thewellnesscommunity.org

The Children's Treehouse Foundation this is America's only organization providing hospital-based, cancer-focused, psychosocial intervention training and programming dedicated to improving the emotional health of children whose parents have cancer. childrenstreehousefdn.org

SuperSibs!

SuperSibs provides services and honors the brothers and sisters of children diagnosed with cancer. SuperSibs! mails comfort and care packages to siblings of children with cancer who live in the US and Canada. Additionally they offer dynamic support online. These services are free of charge to siblings of children with cancer between the ages of 4 and 18.

supersibs.org

National Cancer Institute
"When Your Parent Has Cancer: A Guide for Teens"

This booklet is available at: cancer.gov/cancertopics/When-Your-Parent-Has-Cancer-Guide-for-Teens/PDF

I hope all this information will be very helpful. Till next month - God Bless!

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