



Holistic Treatments for Children

- ❖ Acupuncture
- ❖ Moxa
- ❖ Point stimulation
- ❖ Herbs

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Alternative Medicine for Children

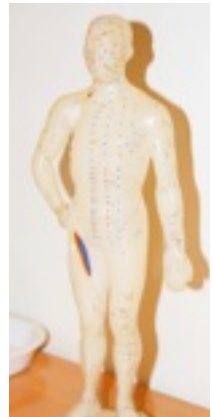
At the Bath practice, we have treatments that are very effective for children's problems. The way we use them is based on the age old system of Chinese medicine. It leads to a treatment or prescription that is individual to your child.

These treatments include acupuncture, moxa, point stimulation, herbs, dietary and lifestyle advice. Different treatments are suitable for different children. Some do very well with acupuncture, while others are more delicate, and respond better to moxa or (painless) point stimulation. In some, dietary therapy is helpful, while others eat only small quantities, so that there is little room for change. In this pamphlet we give an outline of some of these therapies, and the principles underlying them.

We see babies and children of all ages, from a few days old to teenage. The commonest age group is 1 to 3 years.

The Principles of Chinese Medicine

The cornerstone of Chinese medicine is that humans are living beings imbued with an energetic life-force, called Qi. Children have a great abundance, while in old age it declines. Illness occurs when there is not enough Qi, or if there is a blockage, leading to too much in one place and not enough in another. This energy runs along channels (meridians), and can be influenced at points along these channels.



A model from China showing the energy lines and points

Diagnosis

The aim of diagnosis is to determine the overall quantity and quality of Qi, and if there are any blocks or imbalances. As in traditional medicine, we make many observations, as well as asking questions of the parents. Among the things that we consider are:

Face: We look at the overall colours and any unusual distribution of colours. For example, a green tinge around the mouth may indicate indigestion; blue at the bridge of the nose may indicate a sudden shock.

Behaviour: How a child reacts can tell a lot about the inner flow of energy. Do they have the vitality to fight back, or are they more submissive? Is their behaviour wild (characteristic of fire) or is it more reserved (characteristic of cold patterns)?

Pulse: The pulse at the wrist tells a lot. The strength and quality of the pulse at three positions on each side, correspond to internal organs. By taking the pulse one can determine the state of the organs, and their general health.

Back: Is the back strong with good muscles, or is it somewhat concave, with weaker muscles and thinner bones? Each will require a different treatment.



A weak lower back

Taking it all into account

When all these observations have been made, we come to a conclusion about the overall state of a child's energy. Based on this we can often identify a cause in the child's life (or during pregnancy) for the imbalance or sickness. If the cause is ongoing, we will point this out and suggest ways of overcoming the problem. If the cause is in the past, it may guide us to the correct treatment.

Treatments

Acupuncture

Four to six points are chosen for the treatment. A fine, sterile, stainless steel needle is inserted at each selected point in turn. This may cause a slight pricking sensation, but much less than the pain of an injection or immunisation. Immediately after insertion the needle is manipulated subtly and briefly to direct the Qi along the channel giving a tingling or warm sensation. Some children cry a little, but are easily comforted after the needle has been removed. Everything happens quickly, within a minute or so. Until the age of 7 years, treatments are normally carried out with the child sitting on the parent's lap – the safest place to be!

What makes this an acceptable treatment for children is the special needle technique I was taught in China, which is virtually pain-free. It is the subject of our DVD 'The Gentle Needle'.

Moxa

Moxa treatment is also based on the acupuncture points, but heat is used instead of a needle. The heat is supplied by a smouldering herb known as moxa, which is a prepared form of Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*). This is what gives an acupuncture clinic its characteristic smell. Often the moxa is rolled into a cigar, and the lighted end is used to warm a point and the area round a point. The sensation is very pleasant, and it is an excellent



treatment for the more sensitive child. It is also indicated in all 'cold' conditions (typically where the child has a pale face and suffers from cramps or colic).

Point stimulation

This too uses the acupuncture points, and the basis of stimulation is a tiny electrical current. This relatively new method uses such small currents (50 to $100\mu\text{A}$) that they cannot be felt. If the current is increased too much, a very mild tingling sensation can be felt. Surprisingly, the most effective treatments are those which cannot be felt at all. This treatment is excellent for the more sensitive child, though is perhaps not so good for the robust child who needs an immediate and strong result (such as a child with excruciating pain from ear infection).



Herbs

Plants have been used for healing since the very earliest times. Over the years their use has become more and more sophisticated. Now we use plant extracts called tinctures. These last for a long time, and are very easily dispensed. A typical prescription will include 4 to 5 herbs, but will only need doses of 20 to 30 drops of tincture. These are easily taken in a small glass of water. There are some children whose sense of taste is so heightened that they cannot take the slightest unusual taste, but most children can easily take the mixture if it is sweetened enough. Herbs are especially useful for a condition that requires long term treatment, for conditions



Coltsfoot flowers have been used since Roman times for treating coughs

that change only slowly, or for children who live a long way off, and for whom coming to the clinic is a real difficulty.

The Bath Practice

is child friendly. Most children love coming – simply to play with the toys. They don't specially like treatments, but for many, even acupuncture is no worse than having their mouth wiped!



How Many Visits?

Children's corner

The number of treatments depends on your child's pattern of illness, one to ten treatments for simple patterns, ten to twenty for others, while some deeply rooted conditions may require many more treatments. In some cases we give no treatment, and are able to reassure the parent that nothing is seriously wrong. We will give you some idea at your first visit.

Julian Scott MA, PhD, Cert Ac. studied in England and in China. He has been treating children with acupuncture since 1976. In 1984 he opened the Children's Clinic for Natural Therapies in Brighton. From 1995 to 2000 he was a professor in an acupuncture school in Seattle USA. He is the author (with his wife Teresa Barlow) of several books on the treatment of children. His doctorate was in low temperature physics. He is a member of the British Acupuncture Association. He has lectured on Chinese medicine in many countries in the world. He lives in Bath with his wife and two school-age daughters, so he has first hand experience of the problems facing parents.

Checkup/booster

It is good to come in spring and autumn for a change-of-season boost.

Prevention is better than cure

You can come *before* those winter coughs appear.

Some Conditions Treated

Respiratory	Skin diseases	Developmental
Flu and colds	Eczema	ADD & ADHD
Chronic cough	Oral thrush	Dyslexia
Pneumonia	Mouth ulcers	Learning problems
Asthma	Shingles	Failure to thrive
		Autism
Digestive	Infectious	
Abdominal pain	Measles	Miscellaneous
Constipation	Chicken pox	Insomnia
Vomiting	Whooping cough	Night terrors
Diarrhoea		Palsy
Teething	Glandular	Chronic fatigue
Poor appetite	Mumps	Depression
Food allergies	Mononucleosis	
ENT	Urinary	
Ear infections	Bedwetting	
Glue ear	Urethritis	
Tonsillitis	Cystitis	
Short-sight	Nappy rash	
Crossed eyes	Urinary reflux	

Chinese Proverb

In acute disease treat the symptoms quickly;
In long-term disease treat the cause slowly.