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Acupuncture and Eye Health

Your eyes are a reflection of your overall health. Illnesses such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease can be revealed in the eyes. Conditions such as glaucoma, optic neuritis or vision loss are often associated with systemic health problems. It is this interconnection between your eyes and your health that acupuncture and Oriental medicine can tap into and utilize to treat eye and vision problems. Eye conditions respond well to acupuncture and it has been used successfully to treat a wide range of eye problems for centuries.



How Eye Disorders Are Treated With Acupuncture

Oriental medicine pays close attention to the relationship between tissues and organs. Sometimes an imbalance within the body can manifest as an eye problem, just as the health of the eyes is often a reflection of an imbalance or health problem elsewhere in the body.

When you are treated for an eye condition with acupuncture, any underlying imbalances that are attributing to your symptoms will be addressed. The eye problems will also be treated directly by promoting circulation of Qi (life force) and blood around the eyes.

Common eye problems treated with acupuncture include:

- Glaucoma
- Cataracts
- Chronic Dry Eyes
- Macular Degeneration
- Optic Neuritis
- Optic Atrophy

Acupuncture Points Around the Eye

There are several powerful acupuncture points around the eyes that promote eye health. These points bring Qi and blood to the eyes to nourish the tissue and improve the condition of the eyes.

Jingming (UB-1) - When translated, Jingming means Bright eyes. This point is located in the inner corner of the eye. It is one of the primary points to bring Qi and blood to the eyes and is used for eye problems of all kinds including early-stage cataracts, glaucoma, night blindness, conjunctivitis and blurred vision.

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Seven Essential Nutrients for Eye Health



Support your eye health by incorporating these seven essential nutrients into your diet!

Lutein and Zeaxanthin - carotenoid compounds found in the lens and retina of the eyes. These antioxidants protect eyes from free radicals and a diet high in these compounds may protect the eyes from macular degeneration and cataracts. Carotenoid compounds are found in yellow and orange fruits & vegetables, dark green, leafy vegetables and egg yolks.

Zanzhu (UB-2) - This point lies in the depression at the inner end of the eyebrow. Like Jingming, it is a primary point for the eyes and is used for all types of eye problems. Some of the indications to use this point include headache, blurring or failing of vision, pain in the supraorbital region, excessive tearing, redness, swelling and pain of the eye, twitching of the eyelids and glaucoma.

Yuyao - In the hollow at the midpoint of the eyebrow, directly above the pupil. It is used for eye strain, pain in the supraorbital region, twitching of the eyelids, ptosis, cloudiness of the cornea, redness, swelling and pain of the eyes.

Sizhukong (SJ 23) - In the hollow at the outside end of the eyebrow. This point is used for eye and facial problems including headaches, redness and pain of the eye, blurring of vision, twitching of the eyelids, toothache and facial paralysis.

Tongziliao (GB 1) - Located on the outside corner of the eye. This point is used to brighten the eyes as well as for headaches, redness and pain of the eyes, failing or blurring of vision, photophobia, dry, itchy eyes, early-stage cataracts and conjunctivitis.

Qiuhou - Below the eye, midway between St-1 and GB-1 along the orbit of the eye. Used for all types of eye disease.

Chengqi (St 1) - With the eyes looking straight forward, this point is directly below the pupil, between the eyeball and the eye socket. This is a main point for all eye problems, conjunctivitis, night blindness, facial paralysis and excessive tearing.

In addition to acupuncture, there are several things you can do each day to maintain eye health and avoid problems. Drink eight to ten glasses of water to keep your body and eyes hydrated. Stop smoking. Exercise to improve overall circulation. Make a conscious effort to stop periodically to rest and blink frequently especially when reading, working on a computer or watching television. Avoid rubbing your eyes. Always remember to always protect your eyes from the sun's harmful UV light and glare with protective lenses.

Would you like to learn more about how acupuncture can help you with an eye condition? Please call now for a consultation.

Chrysanthemums: More Than Meets the Eye

Chrysanthemum flowers (Ju Hua) are boiled to make a popular cooling tea to drink or use topically on the eye. Chrysanthemum tea has many medicinal uses. Used for at least 2,000 years, this herb was first listed by the physician Shen Nong who suggested that continued use would "slow aging and prolong life".



The boiled flowers or tea bags may be kept in the fridge and used as eye masks to ease tired eyes, reduce heavy eye bags and get rid of redness, pain or dryness of the eyes.

Vitamin A - helps prevent night blindness, stop the formation of cataracts, and may prevent blindness from macular degeneration. Deficiency can cause dry eyes, corneal ulcers, swollen eyelids and, if not corrected, blindness.

Vitamin C - can help reduce the risk of cataracts. It may also play a role in delaying macular degeneration and preventing and relieving glaucoma.

Vitamin E - a powerful antioxidant shown to prevent cataracts and helps prevent macular degeneration.

Bioflavonoids - give certain foods their color and often work as antioxidants. Any food that contains these nutrients also contains vitamin C. Citrus, red and purple fruits are excellent for the eyes.

Omega 3's - These essential fatty acids convert into prostaglandins that regulate intraocular pressure, help the eye drain and may help protect against dry eye syndrome. Connected with eyesight development, deficiencies of essential fatty acids may lead to impaired vision, retinal or macular damage. The best source of Omega 3's is cold water fish such as Salmon.

Essential Minerals - Zinc, Selenium, and Copper are all essential for healthy eyesight. Zinc helps the body absorb vitamin A which is required for normal eye function and adapting to the dark. Zinc has been used for the specific purpose of reducing age related macular degeneration and a deficiency may lead to cataracts. Selenium helps the body to absorb vitamin E to . Copper helps reduce the development of age related macular degeneration.

Cold Chrysanthemum Tea

Ingredients

- * 60 - 80 White Chrysanthemum Flowers
- * 3 teaspoons of Jasmine Green Tea
- * Rock sugar or honey
- * 4 liters (1 Gallon) of water

Instructions:

1. Wash the chrysanthemums.
2. Put chrysanthemum and tea into a cooking pot.
3. Pour in water and bring to a boil.
4. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes.
5. Add rock sugar or honey.
6. Remove from the heat and cool to room temperature.
7. Strain and put into the refrigerator.
8. Serve chilled and enjoy!

THE HISTORY OF MILK: Raw vs. Pasteurized

Hello Everyone,

I have a confession to make: I drink raw milk ... and cream and butter and yogurt! In fact, over the past 6 months I've eaten a lot of raw dairy products. As usual, I've done a lot of reading and research about raw dairy, and it seems once again we've been duped into thinking that raw is bad, even dangerous, and that pasteurization is the way to go.

Historically, milk has nourished humans for tens of thousands of years. Breast milk is the ideal food for babies, and often the first food he or she eats. People have milked oxen, water buffalo, yaks, goats, sheep, cows, zebus, and even reindeer to provide sustenance and comfort. In India the cow is considered sacred. Hindus believe the cow was the first animal created by their gods. The consumption of milk goes back at least 30-40,000 years and probably much further. Hippocrates, one of the world's most famous physicians, believed milk and dairy products possessed healing properties.

In North America, the first domesticated cows arrived in Vera Cruz, Mexico in 1525 in what was then called New Spain. From Mexico cows made their way across the Rio Grande River into the US. The pilgrims brought no livestock with them when they arrived in Plymouth on the Mayflower in 1620. The arrival of cows, in particular, helped the pilgrims survive and eventually thrive, as they increased their herds and produced increasing amounts of dairy foods to sustain them. By the 1790s, the New World was exporting about a million pounds of butter and 100,000 pounds of cheeses each year. The population of the US at that time was about 3 million, and 90% of the people lived on farms and plantations. The largest city, New York City, had 33,000 residents. The cattle population of the country was approximately 18 million.

Milk in America at the beginning of the 19th century was the same quality as the milk that had fed humanity for millennia. Cows were mostly or completely grass fed, and their milk was nutritious and healthy. This started to change as cities grew larger, and America's involvement in war also would lead, strangely enough, to changes in milk production. America's War of 1812 with England caused a permanent embargo of the US liquor trade with the British West Indies. This gave birth to a domestic liquor industry.

As cities grew, pasture lands shrank, and as the demand for liquor increased, herds of cows were installed next to liquor factories. This gave the distillery owners a way to dispose of the grain by-products and have a cheap way to feed cows. The cows were fed the distilled grain swill that was the byproduct of the liquor production. Cows are not meant to consume grains, let alone grain swill. It is an unnatural food for them and as a result the cows were unhealthy and produced unhealthy milk. In fact so unhealthy that infant mortality rates in large cities like Philadelphia and New York rose to 50% by the mid 1800's, largely a result of infants being fed tainted milk from 'swill' cows. This swill milk was so deficient in nutrients that it couldn't be made into butter or cheese!

As the 19th century waned, we see the emergence of two movements that would change milk production forever in the US. The first group was medical doctors, mainly pediatricians, who supported the production of safe and healthy raw milk for use in maintaining health, preventing illness, and also for the treatment of disease. This group was known as the 'certified milk' movement.

The second group borrowed the name of Louis Pasteur and backed the use of a heating process known as pasteurization. Pasteur was a chemist who discovered that by heating wine to a certain temperature, winemakers could partially sterilize it by killing the bacteria responsible for spoilage. Later this method was applied to milk to increase its shelf life (wine is no longer pasteurized). Pasteurization did kill some of the harmful bacteria in the 'swill' milk.

What was ignored by the pasteurization group was the seemingly obvious fact that the reason raw milk made people sick in large cities was the poor health of the animals, not necessarily that the milk was raw. Raw milk from healthy, grass fed cows does not contain harmful bacteria. In fact, harmful bacteria like E. Coli, Salmonella, and Listeria are completely eradicated within days and sometimes hours, when they are placed in containers of raw milk! Raw milk from grass fed cows also contains higher amounts of conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), a known anti-carcinogen. CLA helps with weight loss, too! Grass fed cow milk also has more Vitamins A, D and K. Studies show most Americans are deficient in A and D, which are essential nutrients for a healthy brain and nervous system, immune system, bone and teeth health, and a myriad of other things. Vitamin K is crucial for protecting against atherosclerosis and heart disease.

While the process of pasteurization kills some harmful bacteria, it also kills good bacteria and many of the enzymes, like lactase, which is needed to digest the milk sugar lactose, and it also destroys the enzyme phosphatase, which helps you absorb the calcium in milk. It denatures the milk proteins, making them harder to digest and utilize. Pasteurization also destroys B vitamins and much of the Vitamin C in milk (raw milk contains more Vitamin C than citrus fruits!). Pasteurized, homogenized milk has been linked to a whole host of ailments including asthma and allergies, arthritis, heart disease, diabetes, gastrointestinal diseases (including Crohn's and colitis), eczema, frequent ear infections and sinusitis in children, and on and on.

The choice is yours. I am all for consuming safe, nutritious foods. I would strongly encourage all of you dairy lovers to visit realmilk.com and learn more about raw versus pasteurized dairy. You may also want to read "The Untold Story of Milk" by Ron Schmid, ND. At the very least, if you use pasteurized dairy foods, be sure they are from organic, grass fed animals. Next issue I will talk more about the politics of food and milk, in particular.

To your continued good health,
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