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Acupuncture for Healthy Skin

Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can be very effective at treating skin conditions. Treatments can provide quick relief for acute symptoms and can provide significant and lasting relief from recurrent or chronic skin conditions.

The skin reflects and reacts to imbalances within the body's internal landscape and the effects of the environment. Internal disharmonies caused by strong emotions, diet, and your constitution as well as environmental influences, such as wind, dryness, dampness, and heat can all contribute to the development of a skin disorder. To keep your skin healthy and beautiful on the outside, you must work on the inside of your body as well. Increasing the flow of energy, blood and lymph circulation improves the skin's natural healthy color.

Promotion of collagen production increases muscle tone and elasticity helping to firm the skin. Stimulating the formation of body fluids nourishes the skin and encourages it to be moister, softer, smoother and more lustrous.

General skin conditions that can be treated with acupuncture and Oriental medicine include acne, dermatitis, eczema, pruritus, psoriasis, rosacea, shingles and urticaria (hives). Oriental medicine does not recognize skin problems as one particular syndrome. Instead, it aims to treat the specific symptoms that are unique to each individual using a variety of techniques with acupuncture such as herbal medicine, bodywork, lifestyle/dietary recommendations and energetic exercises to restore imbalances found in the body. Therefore, if 10 patients are treated with Oriental medicine for eczema, each patient will receive a unique, customized treatment with different lifestyle and dietary recommendations.

If you suffer from a skin condition or would like to know how to optimize your skin health, please call to find out more about how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help you.

Foods to Help You Look Your Best

Acupuncture views nutrition in a complex light, through the application of Oriental medicine wisdom to dietary habits. In short, certain foods are considered too yang, or hot to eat in excess during the warmer months, while others are prized for their yin ability to cool the body. Overall, the goal is balance between the internal yin and yang of the body.

A healthy, nutritional diet, getting good quality sleep and moderate exercise can keep your skin and physical form at it's best. Be sure to integrate these items into your diet to help keep you looking your best!



Carrots and Sweet Potatoes - Healthy skin is directly dependent on the amount of vitamin A in our diet. Vitamin A acts as an antioxidant to neutralize harmful elements in our skin, helps to prevent wrinkles, resist

infection and maintain the skin's elasticity. One of the best places to get Vitamin A is vegetables that are deep orange in color.

Blackberries, Blueberries, Strawberries, and Plums - In a study recently published in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*, these four fruits weighed in with the highest "total antioxidant capacity" of any food. Antioxidants and other phytochemicals in these fruits can protect cells from damage and disintegration, thus guarding against premature aging.

Salmon, Walnuts, Olive Oil, and Flax Seed - Essential fatty acids (EFAs) are responsible for skin repair, moisture content, and overall flexibility, but because the body cannot produce its own EFAs, they must be obtained through the diet. Fish, walnuts, and flax seed oil are among the best sources for omega 3 fatty acid. Eating good-quality olive oil helps keep skin lubricated and keeps it looking and feeling healthier overall. Which olive oil is the best for your skin? Those labeled "cold pressed", "expeller processed", or "extra virgin" are the least processed forms. As a result, they contain the highest levels of antioxidative substances.

Whole Wheat Bread, Brown Rice, Turkey, Tuna and Brazil Nuts - Selenium is an antioxidant mineral responsible for tissue elasticity and healthy skin. It may play an important role in preventing skin cancer, as some recent studies are showing that skin damaged by the sun may suffer fewer consequences if selenium levels are high.

Green Tea – Green tea's ability to slow down the development of some signs of aging is attributed to its high levels of *polyphenols*, which have been well-documented for their antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Green tea may help prevent or reduce the risk of skin cancer according to a study published recently in the *Archives of Dermatology*, which shows that whether taken orally or applied to the skin, green tea can reduce the risk of damage from ultraviolet light and thus reduce the risk of skin cancer.

Water - Hydration plays a key role in keeping skin cells healthy. It is essential to maintaining your skin's elasticity and suppleness. Keeping cells hydrated helps cells move nutrients in and toxins out, which helps keep skin clean and clear.

Treating Hives with Acupuncture

Hives (urticaria) are swollen, red, bumps, patches or welts on the skin that appear suddenly. Itching is the most common symptom associated with hives, although some people report that hives cause a stinging or burning sensation. Hives can occur anywhere on the body including the hands, face, lips, tongue, throat, or ears.

A sign that the whole body is experiencing a hypersensitivity reaction a hives outbreak can occur due to a wide array of stimuli. While intolerance to certain foods, additives, intense emotions, sunlight exposure, and medications can all cause hives, in 70-75% of outbreaks the exact cause of hives remains unknown.

Whether lasting for just a few minutes, a few hours or persisting for several weeks hives are rarely a medical emergency however, in some cases they can be accompanied by shock, difficulty breathing and be life threatening. About 20% of people will experience hives (urticaria) at some point in their lives. While standard treatment for hives is directed toward relieving unpleasant symptoms with antihistamines or a corticosteroid drug many people are turning to acupuncture and Oriental medicine to address underlying imbalances that cause this condition and stop recurrent outbreaks once and for all.

Evidence that Acupuncture and herbal medicine have been used for skin disorders, such as hives, can be found in early medical literature dating back to 3 AD. Medicinal plants and stone needles were utilized to relieve and cure discomforts of the external areas of the body.

In Oriental medicine, an outbreak of hives is described as wind invading the skin and the meridians, causing itching and swelling. When the eruptions are red it is an indication that wind and heat are involved. When the eruptions are a pale pink or white, it is likely that the diagnoses will be wind-cold invading the skin. How the condition is diagnosed will determine what acupuncture points are used, what herbal medicinals are prescribed and what lifestyle/dietary recommendations are made.

Treatments are directed at addressing both the cause and the symptoms by providing immediate relief from the itching and swelling and addressing the underlying imbalances and triggers that are causing the condition.