

Treating Common Childhood Ailments using Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine

By Toni Eatros, MS, Dipl Ac, AP

It's back to school time again and for many that means recurrent colds, flus and earaches. Acupuncture and herbal medicine can strengthen your child's immune system and help to decrease frequency and severity of illness. Chinese Medicine has been effectively treating children for centuries.

Addressing the Root Cause to Treat Illness

Oriental medicine views the treatment of children to be extremely important, and when treating children the most important system to treat is the digestive system. According to Chinese medical theory, children's spleen and stomach, up to the age of approximately six, are inherently immature. Until then, the digestive system is weak and overworked, so it is not uncommon to see children complaining of various digestive upset from diarrhea to indigestion.

Common childhood illnesses effectively treated with Acupuncture & Herbal Medicine:

Cough

Some of the diagnoses attributed to a cough are phlegm in the lungs, a weakness of the lungs or spleen, and a lingering illness. Treatment will depend on your child's medical history, but usually will include acupressure or acupuncture, an herbal prescription and home hydrotherapy treatments discussed at the visit.

Allergic Rhinitis

Allergies, or hay fever, can cause seasonal problems for children. Parents will be happy to know that Oriental Medicine can make a great impact on this problem. The best time to treat this is a month before the symptoms usually appear. You can always see a practitioner when the symptoms arise, but if you are interested in preventing the symptoms, then treatment before the symptoms appear is best.

Otitis Media

Ear aches and ear infections are very common illnesses in babies and children. Acupuncture and herbal medicine has a good track record for treating both the acute and chronic variations. The acute otitis media is much easier to treat with the child experiencing relief quickly.



Constipation

Constipation is seen frequently in children, as their digestive systems are delicate. There are two main causes for constipation in children. The first is an accumulation and overeating, irregular eating, and eating raw indigestible foods. Constipation can also be caused by a weak spleen and stomach. This weakness can be acquired by poor diet, prolonged digestive upset and recurrent illness. Herbs and acupuncture easily rebalance a delicate digestive system.

Emotional Disorders

Children, teens and young adults respond quickly to acupuncture and herbal medicine for the treatment of all types of emotional disorders including depression, anxiety, recurrent nightmares, and hyperactivity, just to name a few. The pediatric patients that I see for emotional disorders usually look forward to coming in for treatments.

What treatment techniques are used to treat Children?

Parents are usually apprehensive about bringing in their child to get acupuncture because of its association with needles. Children usually do not have a problem with needles if the parents minimize discussion about it before the treatment. Regardless of the fear or not, not all treatments need to use needles.

Often we will choose to use acupressure, where I use my fingers or a small tool to stimulate the appropriate areas without the use of needles. We can also use small acupressure machine at the acupuncture point to send a small pulse to the area of need. This pulse feels like a small tapping and some children even feel like it tickles.

Sometimes we elect to use acupuncture needles. In children under seven or eight years old, usually an in/out technique is used, where the needle is inserted just for a moment and immediately removed. It is so quick, the child usually is not sure of what has happened.

I have found that starting at age seven or eight, the children like to retain the needles for a few minutes. A visible change occurs almost immediately after the needles are set. Many of the children fall asleep for a few minutes. Their illness responds quickly to the rebalancing of the body and the child has a unique experience to talk about at school. Many of my pediatric patients ask their parents when they get to come back.

Another important therapy for children is herbal medicine. Herbal medicine has been used for centuries in the treatment of children. Antibiotics are not always necessary and with herbal medicine you can bypass the side effects experienced from taking medication. Herbal medicine is used for a short period of time when treating acute conditions and longer when treating chronic diseases.

At your child's visit, we will discuss ways to treat the current illness and things that you can do at home to prevent recurrent illness. We will build your pediatric first aid kit, so at the first sign of illness, you can implement treatment immediately instead of waiting for an illness to become severe enough to warrant a trip to the pediatrician and antibiotics.

If your child seems to be sick more than he/she is well, then it is important to start treatment immediately to build up the immune system before cold and flu season begins. 2,500 years of medical history can't be wrong. Call now to schedule an appointment, 239-260-4566 or go to our website, www.AcupunctureSolutionsOnline.com for more information.

Yours In Health & Wellness,
Toni L. Eatros, AP

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