Moxibustion
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Moxibustion is a traditional Chinese medicine technique that involves the burning of mugwort, a small, spongy herb, to facilitate healing. Moxibustion has been used throughout Asia for thousands of years; in fact, the actual Chinese character for acupuncture, translated literally, means “acupuncture-moxibustion.” The purpose of moxibustion, an integral form of traditional Chinese medicine, is to strengthen the blood, stimulate the energy, and maintain general health.

How does moxibustion work? Does it hurt?

There are two types of moxibustion: direct and indirect. In direct moxibustion, a small, cone-shaped amount of moxa is placed on top of an acupuncture point and burned. This type of moxibustion is further categorized into two types: curing and non-curing. When using moxibustion, the moxa is placed on a point, ignited, and allowed to remain near the point until it burns out completely. This may lead to localized burning. In indirect moxibustion, the moxa rod is placed at a distance from the acupuncture point, and the resulting heat is conducted by means of moxa and skin. The patient will experience a pleasant heating sensation that penetrates deep into the skin, but should not experience any pain, swelling or burning unless the moxa is left in place for too long.

In a large meta-analysis, reviewed 2016, 606 randomized controlled trials involving 52,806 patients showed that moxibustion was associated with a significant improvement in symptoms when compared to either placebo or no treatment. The evidence was graded as high quality for some outcomes and moderate quality for others. The improvement included a wide range of conditions, including respiratory, cardiovascular, digestive, and musculoskeletal disorders.

Benefits of moxibustion:

- Improved blood circulation and blood supply
- Improved immune system function
- Improved digestive function
- Improved respiratory and cardiovascular function
- Improved musculoskeletal function
- Improved mental health

Moxibustion has also been used to treat a wide range of conditions, including:

- Acupuncture points: Moxibustion is often used to stimulate acupuncture points to promote healing.
- Moxibustion is often used to treat conditions that are difficult to treat with other methods, such as chronic pain.
- Moxibustion is often used to treat conditions that are caused by a deficiency of yang, such as coldness.

Moxibustion is not recommended for:

- Pregnant women
- Patients with a history of bleeding disorders
- Patients with a history of diabetes

Moxibustion is generally safe, but it is important to consult with a qualified practitioner before starting treatment.

[Source: National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health]