

Moxibustion

Mugwort is a common plant used practically all over the world in rituals of witchcrafts and healing. In Chinese medicine the burning of mugwort, also known as moxa, is referred to as moxibustion. It is used for expelling cold, warming the meridians, inducing the smooth flow of both blood and qi, strengthening yang from collapse, to help prevent disease and promote general health and a long life. Moxa is prepared in several different forms for use by practitioners. A few forms include: loose moxa which gets compacted into cones, moxa sticks are paper packed herbs shaped like cigars, and smokeless moxa that comes in a stick form.

Moxa can be burned directly on the skin, indirectly burned on the skin by being insulated or burning it on top of a needle so that the heat travels through the needle, or burning moxa and holding the source near the skin. With direct burning moxa there are specific indications for which one would allow the cone to burn the skin. Indirect moxa is insulated from the skin by burning it on top of garlic, ginger, salt, monkshood powder mixed with alcohol, or on top of a needle. With moxa sticks, they are held above the skin to warm the area. Often times additional herbs can be rolled in with the moxa when preparing the stick.

Moxa is indicated in many conditions, but the most studied indication in America is its use for breech babies. In 1998 the Journal of American Medicine Association printed a study in which moxibustion on bladder 67 during the 33rd week of gestation was administered for one to two weeks. During this time 75.4% of the women experienced increased fetal activity and their babies turned over.

Sources:

Chinese Acupuncture and Moxibustion. Cheng Xinnong, Ed. Foreign Language Press. Beijing. 1999.
<http://www.gentlebirth.org/archives/breech.html#Moxa>. Midwife Archives. "Prenatal Breech Issues". Ronnie Falcão, LM MS. ([Moxibustion for Correction of Breech Presentation A Randomized Controlled Trial](#). Francesco Cardini, MD; Huang Weixin, MD. JAMA - November 11, 1998)