

# diabetes

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# Chinese medicine used to treat diabetes

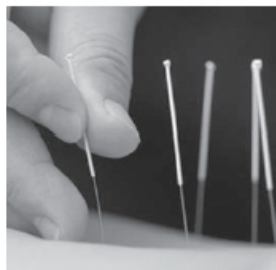
Special to The Citizen

In the U.S. alone, 6,000 new cases of type 2 diabetes, which is caused mostly by environmental factors, are diagnosed every year. But because the Chinese have been studying diabetes for so long, they have a deep understanding of the condition.



Even in 100 B.C., "xiao-ke," which was once the term to describe diabetes, is mentioned in medical writings.

The Chinese define diabetes as a deficiency in yin and a shortage of Qi, which translates into vital energy, therefore causing an improper balance of yin and yang. The Chinese separate the different types of diabetes into three terms: upper, middle and lower xiao-ke. The upper is



Contributed

**The Chinese were writing about diabetes as early as 100 B.C. and use herbs and acupuncture to treat the symptoms.**

caused by thirst, which affects the lungs; the middle is caused by extreme hunger, which affects the stomach; the lower is caused by excessive urine, which affects the kidneys. These types of diabetes are caused by an improper diet, emotional disturbances or a deficiency of yin. The cause will determine

the course of treatment.

Doctors who practice Chinese medicine have more time to spend with each patient than Western medical doctors, according to the Institute for Traditional Medicine and Preventive Healthcare. Therefore, these doctors have the opportunity to discuss diet, daily activities, exercise, sleep patterns, stress levels and other factors that play a role in diagnosing a treatment for each patient's specific case of diabetes. The treatment will most likely be an herb tablet and/or acupuncture. Dietary changes or meditation are also sometimes used.

In Chinese medicine there are 20 different herbs that are used for the treatment of diabetes and those herbs are used in a variety of combinations. The Kuancheng Institute of Diabetes in China conducted a research study in 1989, with 33 patients given herbal supplements to treat their diabetes. Of these 33 patients, 28 showed improvement. Traditional

Western medicine and Chinese herbs together could decrease a person's blood sugar too much or too fast. Herbs should be added gradually and once they kick in, should allow a decrease in the amount of Western medicine needed.

Acupuncture is the other form of Chinese medicine that is used to treat diabetes. Treatment of diabetes with acupuncture has been effective in reducing blood sugar levels, especially in individuals with type 2, non-insulin dependent diabetes, the most common form of diabetes. Needles are placed in up to 30 locations on the body to relieve tension and allow Qi energy to flow naturally. Six to fourteen sessions are usually needed, and then tune-ups may be recommended.

Diabetic acupuncture can also help diabetics in the following ways: Attenuate symptoms of polyphagia, (impulse to overeat), polydipsia, (excessive thirst), enhance blood outflow and regulate vascular peripheral resistance, increased cell pro-

liferation, and prevent slowing of motor nerve conduction. In addition, diabetic acupuncture treatment programs can also reduce the prolonged healing time of diabetic non-healing skin wounds such as ulcers.

Chinese medicine dates back to more than 3,000 years and even though new research is being conducted every day in our modern world to treat chronic conditions like diabetes, the basic ideas behind Chinese medicine haven't changed. Our bodies are a balance of energy and when that balance is disrupted through our current environmental issues and hectic lifestyles, the balance must be restored to maintain optimal health. Chinese medicine offers a safe, effective way to manage and treat diabetes.

— Submitted by Ashley Hoyt, doctor of acupuncture. For more information, contact the Clinic of Alternative Medicine in Key West at 305-296-5358. The office is located at 3420 Duck Ave.

- Acupuncture
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