

Let's Talk About...

Traditional Chinese Medicine

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) includes many different practices. TCM is rooted in Chinese writings and family practices passed down from generation to generation. Today, TCM and Western medicine are practiced together in many hospitals and clinics around the world.

In TCM, the body is a whole whose parts have separate jobs but work together. TCM practitioners believe there is a life force or energy, called **qi** [CHEE], that flows throughout the body in energy pathways called **meridians** [muh-RID-ee-uhns].

The goal of TCM treatments is to regulate and encourage the proper flow of qi through the body

How does TCM work?

Picture a free-flowing river. As rocks, sticks, and branches enter the river, the water gets choppy and cluttered. If there are too many rocks, sticks, and branches, the river can dam up and the water pools and stands still.

TCM providers believe that qi flows throughout the body in meridians just as water flows down a river. Internal and external stresses are like rocks, sticks, and branches in the water. Some stress is okay, but, when the body gets overloaded, the qi gets choppy and chaotic. If the qi dams up completely, it can lead to major health problems.

Special tools, needles, and herbs are used to get the qi moving, release dams, and help chi flow through the body's meridians.



What are some different kinds of TCM treatment?

- **Acupuncture** [AK-yoo-punk-cher]: Very thin needles are inserted into the skin on the acupuncture meridians.
- **Acupressure**: Fingers or small tools are pressed on points on the acupuncture meridians.
- **Acutonics**: A tuning fork is placed on points on the acupuncture meridians.
- **Cupping**: Small suction cups are placed on points on the acupuncture meridians.
- **Gua Sha** [GWA SHUH]: The skin is rubbed or scraped with special tools.
- **Shoni Shin** [SHOW-nee SHIN]: Needleless acupuncture used for children; metal tools are brushed or tapped against the skin on the acupuncture meridians. This treatment originated in Japan.
- **Tui Na** [TWE NAH]: Gentle and fluid body movements encourage the proper flow of qi through the body.
- **Qi Gong** [CHEE GUNG]: Specific body movements move energy through the body.
- **Chinese herbal medicine**: Custom teas or patented formulas help promote healing.

