

# What is Moxa and What do I Need to Know About it?

Moxa is short for moxibustion and is the burning of dried leaves usually from the mugwort plant that has been used for thousands of years in Asian forms of medicine.

## Methods of Moxa delivery:

Moxa can be applied by direct or indirect methods. Direct is where a moxa cone is placed directly on the skin. In indirect, the moxa is kept usually an inch or so from the skin. A roll of moxa that looks like a cigar may be used and moved about over the area to be treated or moxa may be placed on the end of an acupuncture needle.

## What you may feel:

You may feel a local warmth or a deep flooding warmth that moves out along pathways called channels or meridians.

## Effects of Moxa:

Moxa increases the flow of blood and of vital energy called Qi. It is warming and nourishing and can get rid of cold in the body and the channels.

## Uses for Moxa:

Moxa is used to treat many conditions including digestive problems, obstetric and gynecologic conditions such as infertility, breech baby, and menstrual cramps, and all kinds of pain including arthritis, headache, muscle stiffness and pain, and neck and back pain. It can also be used to protect against colds and the flu and support general health.

## Contraindications:

Do not use on the lower abdomen, lower back, breasts, or genitals if you are pregnant. Do not use when you are very hungry, very full, exhausted, intoxicated, thirsty, have a fever, sweating a lot, or in a strong emotional state such as rage or terror.



## How to Use Moxa at Home

If your practitioner has given you a moxa stick to use at home it is important to follow a few safety tips:

- \*Remove clothing from the area to be treated.
- \*Have a cup of water handy to put out the stick at the end of the treatment.
- \*Do not use over areas that do not have feeling (ex. feet with diabetic neuropathy).
- \*Hold the glowing end about 1 to 2 inches above the skin and move it up and down (for arm or leg) or around in circles (for area such as the abdomen).
- \*Move the stick over the skin until you feel warmth and you see the skin turn slightly red or pink (usually about 10 to 20 minutes).



- \*Do not use near the hair or the eyes.
- \*You may do this once a day or once or twice a week as prescribed by your LAc. Stop use and notify your practitioner if you develop a strong thirst, notice a rapid pulse, or start feeling unusually hot.

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