

## **TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE FOR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE**

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High blood pressure (hypertension) is a common disease in the United States and a major risk factor for heart attack (myocardial infarction) and stroke (cerebrovascular accident). Currently, approximately 50 million Americans suffer from hypertension and middle-aged Americans risk an astounding 90% chance of developing it. Morbidity rates in adults range from 13-20%.

According to TCM theory, the onset of hypertension is closely related to body aging and the excess of food, sex and seven emotions (anger, joy, worry, pensiveness, sadness, fear and shock). These factors can cause problems such as an imbalance between the meridians, Liver and Kidney deficiency and/or Liver Yang rising. To treat hypertension, the following TCM treatment principles may be used: regulate the meridians, strengthen the Liver and Kidneys, anchor Liver Yang, clear dampness and phlegm, invigorate blood and/or resolve stasis.

There is currently a lot of research being done on the efficacy of acupuncture in treating hypertension. This research has shown that acupuncture can reduce sympathetic nervous system activity, thereby directly affecting heart rate and blood pressure. Results have also shown that acupuncture can affect cells in the brain that control blood pressure. After acupuncture treatment, these cells become less active, causing blood vessels to relax. This benefit can be long lasting. Some patients have reported having normal blood pressure nine months after completing treatment.

### ***What can I do if I already have it?***

Your primary physician may choose to prescribe medications to control the condition. These medications are expensive and must be taken daily (usually for a lifetime). They may also have side effects such as fatigue, depression, dizziness, ankle swelling (edema) and sexual dysfunction.

Traditional Chinese Medicine offers treatment options with a tremendous cost savings for prescription medications and fewer side effects. Acupuncture, individualized Chinese herbal formulas, dietary guidelines and Qi Gong exercises offer a natural option for management of hypertension.

### ***How do I reduce my risk of getting high blood pressure?***

Food and diet significantly impact your blood pressure. Research has shown that reducing sodium levels and increasing potassium and calcium levels will lower your blood pressure. Also, smoking, alcohol and obesity will raise your blood pressure. Avoid smoking, limit alcohol intake, maintain a healthy body weight and a healthy diet.

Sources:

\*John McKenzie, ABCNEWS.com, February 27, 2002

\*Aquia Family Chiropractic and Acupuncture Center, PC, MyChiro.com, 1998-2002

\*www.Orientalhealing.net