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CHINA

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IN CHINA
中国周末度假胜地

THE HEALING BENEFITS
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CHINESE MEDICINE
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ACUPUNCTURE

"It was discovered more than 2,000 years ago and has developed from using stones into using needles," says Dr Doris Rathgeber from Four Seasons Hotel Shanghai. "In Chinese medicine we say that with the needle we can stop stagnation on the meridian, where chi should flow. If there is a stagnation of chi, we feel pain. Where the needle goes into the skin the patient will feel a warm reaction, which is called De Qi Sensation, and means the needle has already moved the chi. Western medicine believes the method causes the end of the nerves to send a reflex to the brain, which sends a set of painkilling, relaxing and happy-making hormones into the needled area. Doing acupuncture frequently elevates hormone levels and stops the brain from remembering the pain.

"Sometimes only one to three needles are needed to heal a condition. For the patient, the most important point is to come for help as early as possible. The longer they wait, the more tissues get involved and the root is harder to find. All chronic and acute pain, internal disease, gynaecological diseases, imbalances or deficits can be addressed by acupuncture and if the patient adds herbal medicine, the healing result will be even better. Insomnia, anxiety, depression, sadness and PMS can also benefit."

DR DORIS RATHGEBER, FOUR SEASONS HOTEL SHANGHAI

Dr Rathgeber travelled to Shanghai with her husband and became immersed in learning Mandarin. She started her TCM career as a patient and was so fascinated that her doctor enrolled her into the TCM University in Shanghai, where she studied TCM and Western medicine. She loves being able to offer two complementary medical systems to her patients in her four clinics in Shanghai. www.fourseasons.com

TCM AND THE SKIN

"The skin is a reflection of your internal health and the body's largest surface barrier against

environmental conditions," says Dr Gladys Leung from Chuan Spa. "The 14 meridian channels have direct links to the internal organs while lying within the skin, so the hue, temperature, moisture and lustre of the skin fully reflect our general health. For example, the lungs spread chi and moisture throughout the body, so as long as its energy is plentiful, the skin is nourished and performs well. People with eczema usually have weak lungs.

"All TCM treatments are good for the skin, including herbal medicine, acupuncture, acupressure, meridian massage, cupping, gua sha (scraping), moxibustion and food therapy. Gua sha and cupping, for example, release blockages in the body, withdrawing stagnant blood within the skin and removing toxins via the surface of the skin. Both can activate the renewing power of the skin, increase its resistance to various harmful conditions and ensure a sufficient supply of nutrition to the tissues so that the skin can regenerate faster."

"Moxibustion, burning a herb called moxa, can help expel the cold, warm the meridians and clear dampness, leading to a smoother flow of blood and chi, so that the skin can grow," adds Leung. "Some herbs are beneficial for the skin, like ginseng,

chamomile, lavender, chrysanthemum, rose, mint, cinnamon and ginger. Ginseng is good for refining and rehydrating the skin, promoting cell regeneration. Chamomile and lavender are anti-inflammatory. Chrysanthemum has an antiseptic effect, helping to solve skin ailments and prevent and cure acne. Rose, cinnamon and ginger detoxify. We believe that removing toxins is a crucial part of maintaining a clear complexion, and it helps cleanse the body and improve digestion. Teas are very effective as a part of the holistic TCM treatment. Certain foods help too. White pearl barley is good for skin whitening, wolfberry and lily bulbs for rejuvenating and anti-ageing, and white fungus for nourishing the skin. Walnuts and black sesame help clear pigmentation and almonds moisturise dry, dull skin.

"TCM believes that seasonal climatic conditions, geography and location, habitat, mental and physical elements and the make-up of the person affect the state of their health and in turn affect the skin condition. So first we must know ourselves well and identify the strengths and weaknesses of our bodies before we can keep our skin pretty. We must lead a healthy life pattern with a good

