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# Acupuncture Helps Children With Cerebral Palsy

By Fang Mu, L.Ac., OMD

Chinese Medicine – acupuncture, herbs and special exercises – is an effective aid for people with Cerebral Palsy, and the sooner treatments begin, the better the results.

In both America and China, studies have proven good results, especially with children. Researchers at the children's hospital in Zhejiang Medical University in China treated 75 children suffering from Infantile Cerebral Palsy (ICP) for more than a year. The number of treatments per child ranged from 10 to 120, according to the child's needs. Afterwards, the children showed improved levels of physical exercise, social adaptability and intelligence quotient (IQ).

How does acupuncture help? Chinese Medicine views a person with Cerebral Palsy as having a weak or "windy" liver and weak lungs and spleen. Symptoms include nervousness and constant tightness in the muscles and organs. In other words, the energy is blocked. Chinese Medicine works to strengthen the lung and spleen, get the phlegm moving, strengthen the kidney, relax the muscles, and improve energy and blood flow to the head. The result is that the organs function better, thinking and brain activity is improved and small motor activity improves.

If you put a seed in the ground and water it, the plant sprouts and you must to take care of it. After it grows up, it can become stronger and bear fruit. It is same with a child's body because the chi (the body's energy level) is still forming. If a child begins acupuncture treatment early, then the body can build its strength and energy in a balanced way and create a strong system. Because children's joints are still soft and not completely formed, early treatment can help a child's body to grow straight and with flexibility, instead of hardening into a cramped position, which is often the case in people with Cerebral Palsy.

How many treatments are needed? Clinical studies have seen the best results with treatments at least twice a week for several months to start. Some of my patients have seen dramatic results from treatments three times a week for several months.

When can you expect to see results? One patient came to me with her arm and elbow turned backwards. After three treatments with me, her arms now hang more in the natural line with her arm and she has improved flexibility. Another patient was able to relax his arms and lower them for the first time in years, and his speech and handwriting improved. I am currently working with five Cerebral Palsy patients ranging in age from nine to 53, and all are seeing improvement.

The face of one patient was completely immobile. She was unable to close her eyes at any time. Now, after several months of treatment she is able to close her eyes at will. Another young woman was unable to stand when she came to me, and now she walks several paces across the room by herself.

Early treatment yields better results. If a child can receive acupuncture treatment before the age of 20, he or she will see the best results. Studies have shown that almost 70

percent of children under 20 realize improvement with acupuncture, exercises and herbs. With early treatment and regular "tune-ups" a child with Cerebral Palsy can enjoy a greatly improved life.

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Fang Mu, L.Ac., Oriental Medicine Doctor, received her medical degree for acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine in 1986 from Jiangxi University of Traditional Chinese Medicine in China. She is board-certified in the U.S. and in North Carolina, and is a nationally certified Chinese herbalist. Contact Fang Mu at Mu Chinese Acupuncture and Herbs in Oak Ridge: 336 643 8838 or <http://www.MUAcupuncture.com>.

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