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Home Moxibustion Therapy Instructions

Moxibustion is made from the leaves of the mugwort plant (*Artemisia Vulgaris* or *Artemisia Argyi*) and may be used to stimulate or warm certain acupuncture points. It does this by emitting a deep, penetrating heat as it burns.

‘Moxa’ is packaged in many forms: sticks, cones, grains and loose. Pure moxa smells like cannabis (pot)! It won’t make you high, so don’t even try inhaling. As it produces a significant amount of smoke, it is best utilized outside. Charcoal moxa has undergone a process that results in it producing less smoke when lit, making it ideal for home use.

Before using moxa, you will need to prepare the following:

- A lighter or candle
- A ceramic or glass container with a layer of rice or sand in the bottom to collect any ash in it that may form from the burning moxa as well as to extinguish it afterwards (This is reusable; just rinse and dry it periodically to get the ash out.)
- A small towel or piece of foil to place under the area being treated in case any ash falls off

Home Moxibustion – Instructions

- Stimulate *only the specific, acupuncture points which have been selected* for you by your acupuncturist based on your current condition.
- *Do not perform moxibustion if you feel sick or have a fever.*
- *Exercise caution* when performing home-moxibustion as the hot ash has the potential to burn you, or your children and pets, or even your home, to the ground... pick a safe area, preferably over a hard floor, free from carpet.
- Check out the fun, informative Moxibustion videos on our website.
- Please call the clinic if you have any further questions or concerns about the moxibustion procedure.

Treatment Frequency

- 2-3 times/week at the beginning of or when restarting a course of treatment, but may be safely used every day if desired
- 1-2 times/week for general strengthening of body systems and longevity effects
- Moxa treatment is particularly effective during the transitional phases of the year when one season shifts into the next

Moxa Cone – Procedure

- 1.) Ensure that your *skin is clean, dry*, and otherwise free of oil or other moisturizers. If necessary, clean the area with 70% alcohol.
- 2.) Before first application, *mark your points* with a pen or marker to allow easy location.
- 3.) Remove sticker tape from the bottom/base of moxa cone.
- 4.) Light a candle or ready your lighter. Hold the moxa cone with tweezers and ignite evenly around the entire edge of the top of the cone.
- 5.) *Blow lightly on the cone* to be sure that it is well lit.
- 6.) Carefully place the moxa cone onto the desired location and *press the base firmly into place*. Keep the tweezers and a container close at hand to remove if necessary.
- 7.) Let the cone burn: *initially, you will feel nothing*. The temperature will gradually increase as the cone turns to ash; exercise caution as the inside will be glowing hot – let the cone burn through completely (approx. 5-7 minutes) as long as it remains comfortable – ***if the heat becomes intense or feels like it is burning you or is causing a strong itching sensation***, remove it by grabbing the base of the cone with the tweezers, and place it into the disposal container.
- 8.) Unless otherwise prescribed, use 1 moxa cone for each acupuncture point – *do both sides of the body* – the points may be done simultaneously if you have someone to assist you.
- 9.) It is *normal to have slight redness on the skin after application*. If your skin is sensitive and burns easily, extra precautions may be prescribed for you.

Moxa Stick – Procedure

- 1.) Before first application, *mark your points* with a pen or marker to allow easy location.
- 2.) When using a roll of moxa stick, unwrap about 1 inch of outer paper from either end. (This step is not necessary with charcoal sticks.) *Ignite moxa stick fully around one end* using a lighter or a candle as it may take 20 seconds or so.
- 3.) *Blow lightly around the end of the stick* to be sure that it is well lit.
- 4.) Hold stick *approx. 1 inch above the point* to be warmed; you might find it helpful to use your hand to balance against the area to maintain an even distance so that **there is never any direct contact with the skin.**
- 5.) Direct the stick towards the point until a strong heat is felt – then, slightly circle around the area or move up and down along it, adjusting the speed & distance to maintain a steady, but comfortable warming sensation. *Continue for 1-2 minutes for each point.* The skin around the area will often become noticeably red.
- 6.) *After each point, be sure to tap off any loose ash into the container* before proceeding to the next area. If you suspect that there is no longer any heat coming off the moxa stick, check by holding it 1 inch away from the back of your hand. Re-light if there is no radiating warmth.

Never touch the lighted end of a moxa stick even if it no longer appears to be glowing.
- 7.) When finished, gently snuff out the moxa stick in the container by burying the tip in the sand or rice. Leave it there for at least 10 minutes to make sure it's completely out. (With shorter sticks, another option is to place it into a glass jar lined with dry rice. When the lid is screwed on firmly, the moxa is deprived of oxygen and cannot continue to burn.) The moxa stick may then be re-lit for repeated treatments according to the instructions you received from your acupuncturist.

Moxa Bowl – Procedure

- 1.) Place desired number of moxa cones into the ‘moxa bowl.’ *Push securely into base.*
- 2.) Turn the bowl on its side. Using a lighter or candle, ignite each cone *around the entire edge* of its top.
- 3.) *Blow lightly* on the cones to ensure that they are well lit.
- 4.) Carefully place the bowl on the *horizontal area of the body* to be warmed - usually the lower abdomen or the lower back.
- 5.) Let the cones burn: *initially, you will feel nothing.* The temperature will gradually increase as the cone turns to ash; exercise caution as the inside will be glowing hot – let the cones burn through completely (approx. 5-7 minutes) if it remains comfortable – ***if the heat becomes intense or feels like it is burning you or is causing a strong itching sensation,*** remove it by grabbing the sides of the moxa bowl. (Tweezers may be used to push these cones through the holes in the base into the disposal container lined with rice or sand.)
- 6.) If using pure moxa (not the black ‘smokeless’ type) you will notice a brownish-yellow, oily residue left behind. *Allow this to infuse into the skin for approx. 5-10 minutes* before wiping off with a wet paper towel or alcohol-soaked cotton ball.