

Common Medical Indications for Moxibustion

1. Musculoskeletal Disorders

Moxibustion is frequently used for:

- Chronic low back pain
- Neck pain
- Osteoarthritis
- Knee pain
- Frozen shoulder
- Tendinitis
- Sciatica
- Fibromyalgia
- Chronic myofascial pain

TCM rationale: Warms the channels, dispels cold and dampness, promotes circulation of Qi and Blood.

2. Digestive Disorders

Particularly helpful when symptoms worsen with cold or are associated with deficiency.

- Chronic diarrhea
- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- Abdominal pain
- Bloating
- Indigestion
- Crohn's disease (supportive care)
- Ulcerative colitis (supportive care)

Common points: ST36, CV12, CV6, CV8 (indirect moxa).

3. Women's Health and Gynecology

- Menstrual cramps
- Irregular menstruation

- Infertility associated with “cold uterus” patterns
- Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) support
- Luteal phase deficiency
- Postpartum recovery
- Menopausal symptoms (depending on pattern)

TCM rationale: Warms the uterus, nourishes Yang, improves pelvic circulation.

4. Pregnancy and Breech Presentation

One of the most studied applications.

- Breech fetal presentation between 32–36 weeks gestation

Typically performed on the acupuncture point **BL67 (Zhiyin)**.

Research suggests moxibustion may increase fetal movement and improve the likelihood of cephalic version in selected cases.

5. Immune Support and Fatigue

- Chronic fatigue
- Post-viral fatigue
- Recurrent respiratory infections
- General weakness
- Recovery after illness
- Low energy states

Common points: ST36, CV6, CV4, DU4.

6. Respiratory Conditions

- Allergic rhinitis
- Chronic sinusitis
- Asthma (supportive therapy)
- Chronic bronchitis
- Frequent colds

TCM rationale: Strengthens Lung Qi and defensive Qi (Wei Qi).

7. Neurological Conditions

As part of a comprehensive treatment plan:

- Stroke rehabilitation
- Peripheral neuropathy
- Bell's palsy
- Multiple sclerosis (supportive care)
- Parkinson's disease symptom management
- Post-herpetic neuralgia

8. Urogenital Disorders

- Frequent urination
- Urinary incontinence
- Overactive bladder
- Chronic prostatitis
- Erectile dysfunction associated with Yang deficiency patterns

9. Mental and Emotional Health

In appropriate TCM patterns:

- Anxiety
- Chronic stress
- Burnout
- Depression associated with deficiency patterns
- Insomnia

10. Cold and Deficiency Syndromes

Moxibustion is especially indicated when patients exhibit:

- Cold hands and feet
- Aversion to cold
- Chronic fatigue
- Pale complexion
- Weak digestion
- Low libido
- Yang deficiency patterns

Conditions with the Strongest Clinical Evidence

Current research shows the most promising evidence for:

1. Breech presentation
2. Knee osteoarthritis
3. Chronic low back pain
4. Certain gastrointestinal disorders
5. Cancer-related fatigue (adjunctive care)
6. Functional digestive disorders

While evidence is growing, moxibustion should generally be viewed as a complementary therapy integrated with conventional medical care when appropriate.

Contraindications and Precautions

Avoid or use caution with:

- High fever or acute heat conditions
- Active infections with significant inflammation
- Areas of impaired sensation
- Open wounds or burns
- Severe diabetic neuropathy
- Patients unable to perceive heat properly
- Certain pregnancy situations (except when performed by qualified practitioners for breech presentation)

For integrative medicine practitioners, moxibustion can be a valuable adjunct for chronic pain, digestive disorders, women's health concerns, fatigue syndromes, immune support, and selected obstetric applications, particularly when symptoms demonstrate a cold or deficiency component.