

# Moxibustion Therapy

## Guidelines for using Moxa

Moxa is a plant (*Artemisia argyi* Folium) that is used as a heat source to stimulate acupuncture points. Although acupuncture is better known in the West, moxibustion has also been used in traditional treatments for over 5,000 years in China and is in fact the second part of the name for acupuncture in the Chinese language (zhen jiu, literally “needle moxa”). The moxa you have been given as part of your treatment is in the form of a moxa stick and has been compressed into a cigar-like roll that makes it ideal for use at home. Before using moxa you will need to prepare the following:

- A lighter or candle
- A small ceramic, glass or stainless steel dish to place any ash in that may form on the moxa stick during treatment
- A small towel to place under the area being treated in case any ash is dropped
- A glass screw-top jar (or moxa extinguisher) to extinguish the moxa when the treatment is finished

## How to use the moxa stick

Simply light one end with a cigarette lighter. When the stick is correctly lit, you will be able to hold the lit end two to three centimeters from the back of your hand and feel a pleasant radiating warmth

Hold the lit end of the stick over the area to be treated, maintaining a distance of at least two to three centimeters so that **there is never any direct contact with the skin**.

The moxa stick is then moved slowly over the area being treated, this will begin to feel pleasantly warm.

- When using to turn a breech or posterior positioned baby, the therapeutic time for moxa use is 20 minutes each side. During this time the moxa is briefly lifted away from the point Zhiyin BL-67 each time it becomes hot before resuming treatment (the pecking technique).
- When used to treat other acupuncture points the moxa stick can be applied for five to seven minutes over each point or until the area begins to feel uncomfortably hot.

Any ash that forms on the end of the stick can be gently brushed off by using the edge of the small dish, so that the moxa stick remains hot. If you suspect there is no longer any heat coming off the moxa stick, check by holding it two to three centimeters away from the back of your hand. Re-light if there is no radiating warmth.

**Never touch the lit end of a moxa stick** even if it no longer appears to be glowing.

When treatment has finished place the moxa stick in a glass jar with the lid screwed on firmly or place the lit end into a candle holder so that the moxa stick is deprived of oxygen and cannot continue to burn.

The moxa stick can then be re-lit for repeated treatments according to the instructions you received from your acupuncturist or midwife.