

HEALTH

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TCM

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Scrapes at ills

Scraping therapy (*gua sha*) is a popular folk remedy in China. *Gua* means to scrape, and *sha* refers to the reddish skin patches that are created by scraping.

In ancient times, this was an important remedy for acute diseases often contracted in summer and autumn. Some scholars say that scraping is a variation of traditional Chinese medicine massage.

Before the therapy, the skin is lubricated with oil or water. Then a tool is used to scrape or rub on the selected area until red and purple marks appear.

The scrape is carried out in the same direction and in a consistent fashion, which is crucial to its curative effects. Common scraping tools include horn blades, thin bamboo strips, Chinese tablespoons and coins.

According to TCM, scraping with horn tools helps eliminate pathogens from the body's surface, whereas scraping with jade or stone tools can have a tonifying effect.

From a TCM viewpoint, many health problems are caused by

pathogens, which induce stagnation of the meridians. Scraping therapy promotes chi and blood flow, activates the meridians, draws perspiration to expel pathogens from the body surface, benefits the tendons and helps to regulate the organs.

Sha indicates that the pathogens are being released, and people may feel relaxed or refreshed after treatment. Some physicians use it with other therapies to treat colds, fever, sunstroke, headache, gastrointestinal disorders, neck stiffness, muscular strains, spasms, and joint problems.

Chinese also like to use scraping for the fast alleviation

of symptoms associated with fatigue, common cold, sunstroke, indigestion and motion sickness. Areas of stimulation are usually along the bladder meridian in the back, which runs along each side of the spinal cord. Other areas include the temple, between the eyebrows, the inner elbow and inner knee and, for men, the intercostal space between the second to fourth rib.

This technique isn't suitable for thin people, or those with skin lesions, a tendency to bleed easily or who suffer severe conditions.

Before taking any medicine, consult your TCM or medical practitioner