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This newsletter is not to be used as a substitute for medical advice.

## Natural Alternatives to the FLU Vaccine

*Meera Dossa, Bsc, ND*



With **flu** season looming, many people are faced with the conundrum of whether or not to have the **flu** shot administered. According to the CCCR (Canada Communicable Disease Report), the **influenza** season generally occurs between the months of November and April and will infect up to 25% of the Canadian population each year. Those most likely to succumb to complications from the **flu** are the elderly and individuals with pre-existing medical conditions, which have rendered their immune systems compromised. These populations are encouraged to take the **flu** shot, but are there alternatives to the **flu** vaccine?

The integrity of the immune system, our body's line of defense against numerous pathogens such as bacteria, fungus and viruses, is the main determinant of an individual's susceptibility to the cold and **flu**. Thus, building and strengthening

the body's immune system is the key to preventing invasion by foreign intruders.

Keeping things simple, the first and best strategy for disease prevention is hand washing. Thorough and frequent scrubbing of the hands for at least 15 seconds can go a long way in preventing the spread of infections.

Nutrient deficiencies are among the most frequent causes of depressed immune function. In terms of immune function, the most useful nutrients are ACES (vitamins A, C, E and selenium), the B vitamins, iron and zinc. Therefore, including dietary sources rich in these nutrients, such as plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains, combined with the addition of a good multivitamin, would provide a solid base on which to continue building a healthy immune system. Individuals with weaker constitutions (prone to contracting the cold and **flu** more frequently), or those who are simply looking to arm their arsenal to a greater degree, can also consider the use of intravenous injections of vitamins and minerals. This is commonly known as the **Myer's Cocktail** and it serves to support the immune system as well as speed the recovery process if symptoms of the cold or **flu** are already in full swing!

Avoiding sugar is the next most vital step in ensuring healthy immune function. Unbeknownst to many, the immunosuppressive effects of sugar are quite dramatic, resulting in decreased WBC (white blood cell) function for a few hours after ingestion! Without our defenders in place to fend off unwanted germs, it's no surprise that those who consume sweets in excess tend to be the

same ones who are constantly down and out with the cold or **flu**!

Further, keep in mind that the integrity of the immune system is not solely reliant on physical health. Mental and psychological health are also major players. So, in addition to following all of the aforementioned recommendations, it is also just as important to ensure that stress levels are kept in check, regular exercise is carried out and that adequate sleep is obtained. Keeping these things in check, allows our bodies to rejuvenate and repair from the perils that we are faced with on a daily basis, living in a cosmopolitan city!

Finally, remember that getting sick every once in a while is not necessarily a bad thing. In fact, it is important for our immune system to be activated now and then so it remembers (builds antibodies) how to function! If you follow the suggestions above, you will be able to get through your next bout of the cold or **flu** with more ease and speed!

In order to get your immune system in gear for the next **flu** season, book your appointment with a naturopathic doctor.

**Meera Dossa, ND** is a licensed naturopathic doctor at The Pacific Wellness Institute. She is certified and licensed to perform vitamin injection therapy in the province of Ontario. To book an appointment for dietary assessment, intravenous therapy and naturopathic treatment with Dr. Dossa, please contact The Pacific Wellness Institute at 416-929-6958.

## CHECKLIST for Enhanced Immune Health

- Thorough and frequent hand washing for at least 15 seconds
- Plenty of fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains
- Good multivitamin
- Watch your sugar intake (this includes pastries, desserts, soft drinks and juices)
- Get a little (lot!) of rest and relaxation
- Get moving!
- Catch some ZZZ's (adequate sleep)
- Visit naturopath to get in gear

## Thank You for Your Comments

Here are some of the comments we received recently from our clients. We would like to express our special thanks for their comments and kind permission to display them.

*I would like to let you know that I think that Leon is the best therapist. I've tried several different therapists at other locations and they are no comparison to him. Thanks!!! His technique, attitude and manners are excellent.*

Julia

*I have had several problems with knees, ankle, back pain, and swelling over the course of my treatments with Leon. He is more like a massage therapist/physical therapist, as he always pays attention to what I say and treats the problem area accordingly. He always ends the sessions with helpful advice on exercises and home treatments I can use. He is an excellent massage therapist and I appreciate his dedication and skills.*

Christine H

*Hello Claudia,*

*Sorry I have not been in contact but I wanted to let you know I delivered a baby girl on Dec 5th 2007. Her name is Maya Ann and I want to thank Tony, Emily, Dr Tanaka and Yourself for all your loving care in helping create her and bring her into this world. She is simply amazing!! I so appreciate the care you all showed me on this very difficult journey in conceiving Maya.*

Warmest Regards,  
Dawn-Marie



# Quest for the Acupuncture Point - WHO Standardized Locations

Tim H. Tanaka, Ph.D., D.Ac, RMT, RNCP, BCIAC

Currently, each acupuncturist in North America may locate the same acupuncture points differently, depending on how and where they have been trained. The issue of these point discrepancies may be somewhat of a surprise not only for consumers but also for many acupuncturists and students. The “acupuncture point”, which is supposed to be the most fundamental aspect of this ancient medical treatment, has not been standardized.

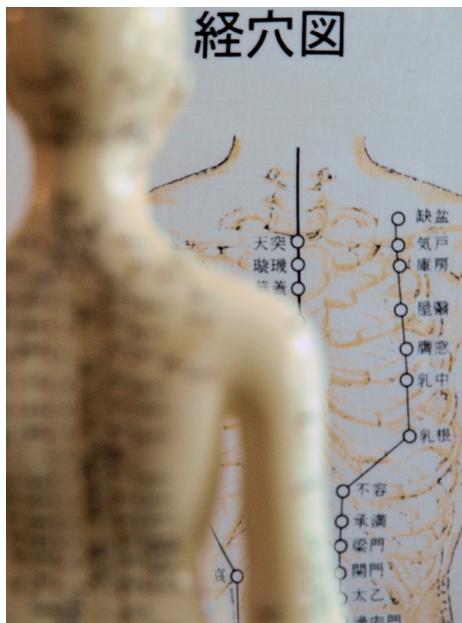
Many people have blindly assumed that acupuncture point location is uniform. Despite this assumption, there has, in fact, been a substantial discrepancy among schools in China, Korea and Japan regarding the locations of some acupuncture points. Even for some of the most famous and commonly used points, (such as the ST36 point - a point located below the knee), location differences existed from institution to institution. Although it has not been widely reported here in Canada, it was big public news in Japan and some other Asian countries

Good news however, is that in late 2006, under the auspices of the World Health Organization (WHO), a group of advisors from China, Japan, South Korea, and other countries met in Tsukuba, Japan, and agreed on an internationally standardized set of 361 acupuncture points. It was a historic moment in the acupuncture community. A final version of the book, WHO Standard Acupuncture Point Locations, was just released in May this year.

## How will the standardization affect the clinical practice of acupuncture?

It is expected that many accredited acupuncture education programs around the world will soon adopt the new international guideline. However, there will be virtually no impact on the way most acupuncturists practice. Here are the reasons why:

A discussion about standardization of acupuncture point locations under the WHO had begun in 2003. During a series of consequent meetings over the next few years, the consensus was made through discussion and negotiations based on traditions in each



country and interpretation of various ancient texts. It was not based on research of clinical efficacy using different point locations.

In reality, the exact location of an “acupuncture point” differs from patient to patient; therefore, during the actual treatment, *experienced* acupuncturists consider the text book location only as a rough guide. They further determine the exact location based on various factors including information detected through practitioner’s fingers - subtle differences in skin texture or underneath tissues, etc. The procedure requires highly sensitive hands, earned through training and years of clinical experience (This is the reason why many renowned

acupuncturists in Japan insist that students train their hands first through massage therapy training). It has been generally understood that acupuncture points are typically within a few millimeters in diameter. Stimulating outside of the parameter potentially has no or much less clinical effect.

## So, why is standardization important?

Standardization is especially important in the educational paradigm. With the internationally agreed standard, training can be done in a more systematic manner and basic minimum knowledge of students can be tested with the same guidelines among schools. The international standard can also be useful for research projects and communication among peers. It is certainly an important landmark project for furthering the credibility of acupuncture.

## Acupuncture beyond acupuncture points

It should be mentioned that the WHO guideline only states “2 dimensional” locations and does not specify how deep the acupuncture needle should be inserted. Research studies have demonstrated that an acupuncture needle inserted in exactly the same location produced different physiological reactions (opposite response in some cases – this is part of the basis of the *multi*

### Points of this article

- Exact location of an acupuncture point differs from person to person.
- Finding effective acupuncture points requires knowledge, skills, and experience.
- Acupuncture is not simply inserting a needle into the location specified in the textbook.

*dimensional meridian structure theory*), depending on how the needle was inserted and stimulated, and whether it was superficially into skin or deeply into muscle. Recent studies also indicated that efficacy of acupuncture is also influenced by various other factors including respiration and posture at the time of needle stimulation.

Standardizing the location of acupuncture points took numerous hours of tireless work by many experts; but it has been done (at least on paper). Standardizing the acupuncture procedure is a different story however. Acupuncture is a complex form of medical therapy involving both science and art.

**Tim H. Tanaka, Ph.D.** is director of The Pacific Wellness Institute and visiting research fellow at School of Health Sciences, Tsukuba University of Technology. The Pacific Wellness acupuncturists, Dr. Tanaka and Yoshio Toyama have been trained and licensed in both acupuncture and massage therapy in Japan and each has over 20 years of clinical experience in these modalities.

## Research Publications Coauthored by Dr. Tanaka

Besides treating many patients and also conducting research here at The Pacific Wellness Institute, our director, Dr. Tanaka has been actively participating in various research projects in other institutes and universities. Recently, a couple of those studies have appeared in peer-reviewed medical journals. A study<sup>1</sup>, conducted at Tsukuba University of Technology, investigated the efficacy of a specific superficial needling method which is regularly utilized by acupuncturists at Pacific Wellness. The study clearly demonstrated the influence of acupuncture on the autonomic nervous system. Another study<sup>2</sup> conducted at the University of Toronto is not related to acupuncture. Rather, it investigated the effects of various cardiac drugs and rehabilitation methods on heart rate variability through systematic review. A voluminous amount of evidence suggests that decreased “heart rate variability” (not “heart rate”) is linked with compromised cardiac function and many other diseases. Thus, it is important to investigate effective treatment strategies that will increase heart rate variability. A comprehensive heart rate variability analysis has been utilized in our facility as one of the objective indexes to evaluate our patient’s response during treatment for over the last several years.

1. Mori H, Ueda S, Kuge H, Taniwaki E, Tanaka T, Adachi K, et al. Pupillary response induced by acupuncture stimulation. *Acupunct Med* 2008 Jun;26(2):79-86.
2. Nolan RP, Jong P, Barry-Bianchi SM, Tanaka TH, Floras JS. Effects of drug, biobehavioral and exercise therapies on heart rate variability in coronary artery disease: a systematic review. *Eur J Cardiovasc Prev Rehabil* 2008 Aug;15(4):386-96.

## New! Hypnosis is Now Available!

The Pacific Wellness Institute is proud to announce that our naturopath, Dr. EeVon Ling, is now offering hypnosis, in addition to her staple of naturopathic approaches, as a valuable tool to help you achieve your health goals. As a certified hypnotherapist, Dr. Ling can use this treatment tool to help you break old habits and create new healthy habits for a wide range of conditions.

**Dr. Ling** is currently offering the use of hypnosis as a treatment option for: **weight loss, stress management, anxiety, fears and phobias**

## SHIATSU – Shape of Thumb Describes the Experience of Therapist

Shiatsu literally means “finger pressure”. The shiatsu therapist applies steady pressure massage on client’s acupuncture points to create therapeutic responses. With training and numerous treatments provided over the years, a shiatsu therapist’s thumbs get stronger; thus he/she is able to place virtually his/her whole body weight onto thumbs. Therapist’s thumbs become larger over the years due to providing a great number of treatments. When this therapy is applied by a skilled practitioner, clients feel comfortable “tender pain”, even when a great amount of pressure is being applied on their body. This is due to the larger contact area from enlarged thumbs and from the way pressure is applied. In contrast, when shiatsu is applied by beginners, clients may experience sharp annoying pain with uneven shaky pressure. Clients can tell the amount of clinical experience of the therapist not only by how it feels during and after the treatment but also by observing the thumbs of the therapist.\*

\* Note: there are exceptions, since some shiatsu therapists are accustomed to using elbows instead of thumbs.



*Pacific Wellness shiatsu therapist Yoshio Toyama is applying thumb pressure.*

# Seasonal Recipe

## Cilantro Chimichurri

EeVon Ling ND



Chimichurri is a traditional Argentinean marinade and dressing. I eat it with everything, from spreading it on sandwiches, dipping it with flatbread, drizzling it over salads, to even adding it to freshly cooked pasta or noodles. I would even eat it straight with a spoon, if I really wanted to. Not only is chimichurri a fresh and tasty addition to your meals, it has numerous health benefits too!

Cilantro is good for digestion and contains a compound that helps detoxify heavy metals and other toxins (perhaps good for counteracting the not-so-healthy charred parts of barbecued meat). It is also high in vitamins A and C (two important antioxidant vitamins that are good for skin and eyes), as well as vitamin E, numerous B vitamins (including folic acid), and many minerals (including calcium and magnesium).

*Eevon Ling, ND is a licensed naturopathic doctor at The Pacific Wellness Institute.*

### Ingredients:

- Extra virgin olive oil – 1/4 cup
- Fresh lime juice – 1/4 cup
- Fresh Cilantro\* – 1 bunch, washed, coarsely chopped with stems and roots removed
- Jalapeno pepper – 1/2 - 1 whole, coarsely chopped with seeds and veins removed
- Garlic – 2 cloves minced
- Sea salt – 2 pinches
- Black pepper – for taste
- Cold water – for consistency

### Directions:

Add olive oil, lime juice, garlic, and jalapeno to a blender or food processor. Blend while adding cilantro in small batches, then add sea salt and black pepper. If needed, cold water can be added, 1 tbsp at a time, while blending until desired consistency. Use immediately and refrigerate leftovers in an airtight container. This will keep in the fridge for 3 days. Stir any leftovers before using.

*Makes 1 cup of chimichurri (total calories: 500)*

### \* Did you know?

Cilantro is something you either love or hate. Those who hate cilantro usually report that cilantro has a soapy or metallic taste. Apparently, this difference in taste perception may be genetic – a certain enzyme that is present or missing affects the way one tastes cilantro. In any case, regular parsley can be used instead of cilantro for this recipe.