

# Moxibustion Therapy

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## Guidelines for using Moxa Sticks.

Moxa sticks are made from the leaves of a plant (*Artemisia argyi*) and used in traditional Chinese medicine to stimulate acupuncture points. The moxa you have been given has undergone a charcoal process to produce a stick that produces less smoke, making it ideal for use at home. Before using moxa you will need to prepare the following:

- A cigarette lighter or candle
- A small **ceramic or glass** 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 to with a layer of rice in the bottom to extinguish the moxa when the treatment is finished

## How to use the moxa stick

Simply light one end with a cigarette lighter or hold over a candle. With smokeless moxa it may take several minutes to light but 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 for each acupuncture point. During this time the moxa is briefly lifted away from the point Zhiyin BL- 67 (found on the outside corner of the nail on the little toe) 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 lighted 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 lined with dry rice to prevent the heat cracking the glass bottom. When the lid is screwed on firmly 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.