

Karen's *Healthy Living Program*: Interview of the Month

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CHINESE MEDICINE and YOU!

Interview with Dr. Mikiala Christie of [Health Within Acupuncture & Traditional Chinese Medicine](#)

Traditional Chinese herbal medicine is one of the great herbal systems of the world, with an unbroken tradition going back to the 3rd century BC. Because of its systematic approach and clinical effectiveness it has had a great influence on the theory and practice of medicine in the East, and has grown rapidly in the West. It still forms a major part of healthcare provision in China.

Chinese medicine is a complete medical system that is capable of treating a very wide range of conditions. It includes herbal therapy, acupuncture, dietary therapy, and exercises in breathing and movement (tai chi and qi gong). Chinese herbal medicine, along with the other components of Chinese medicine, is based on the concepts of Yin and Yang. It aims to understand and treat the many ways in which the balance and harmony between the two may be undermined and the ways in which a person's Qi (Chi) or vitality may be depleted or blocked.

The tradition places great emphasis on lifestyle management in order to prevent disease before it occurs. Chinese medicine recognizes that health is more than just the absence of disease and it has a unique capacity to maintain and enhance our capacity for well being and happiness.

What can Chinese Medicine treat?

- Skin disease, including eczema, psoriasis, acne, rosacea, urticaria
- Gastro-intestinal disorders: irritable bowel syndrome, chronic constipation, ulcerative colitis
- Pre-menstrual syndrome and dysmenorrhoea, endometriosis, infertility
- Chronic fatigue syndrome
- Respiratory conditions: asthma, bronchitis, coughs, allergic and perennial rhinitis, sinusitis
- Rheumatological conditions (e.g. osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis)
- Urinary conditions including chronic cystitis

Interview: [HEALTH WITHIN Acupuncture & Traditional Chinese Medicine](#)

The clinic is located on 5th St. in Sidney, BC. Mikiala Christie and her husband Jeffrey Jones, have been working in the field since 2005, and opened their clinic in 2008. The clinic offers a combination of acupuncture, Chinese herbology, lifestyle counseling and massage.

Mikiala's interest in holistic medicine came about through studying anthropology. It was during her studies when she went on a trip to Australia and found herself surrounded with people who practiced holistic medicine. She quickly became drawn to Chinese medicine's unique philosophy and its comparative nature of Western versus holistic medicine. She was so intrigued that she decided to pursue it as a career.

According to Mikiala and Jeff, **Chinese medicine is about *stimulating the body to heal itself***, and that takes time depending on how long it's developed. "So there's no quick fix." Mikiala explains. "Most of our cells regenerate in a 4-month cycle, so Chinese medicine allows you to change the cellular information by giving the body new signals and stimulating it in various ways."

No two people are alike: Unlike Western medicine, Chinese medicine treatment varies depending on a person's body type—whether they're hot, dry, cold or moist, and in what combinations of this. This is a unique part of Chinese medicine and defines one of its key strengths—*since no two people are alike, no two treatments are alike.*

Emotions: Chinese medicine also treats the emotional and spiritual because when the body's physical is being treated, the other 'bodies' are naturally affected, because all are connected. Emotions can energetically affect the body. For example, a stagnant liver can cause anger and breast distention and pain. When that energy is moved through the liver using diet, herbs, and acupuncture, the body is able to heal itself. People also find it allows them to make better decisions since everything is aligned on a cellular level. "It's amazing to find how much the body understands before the brain does," says Mikiala. "As the body shifts, the brain catches up!"

Women's issues: This is a huge part of Mikiala's work, and CM has a great success rate treating peri menopause, menopause, post menopause and PMS. Many women are challenged with hormones, fatigue, aches and pains. The process at **Health Within** consists of an evaluation with questions regarding energy levels, digestion, history etc. Mikiala then checks the clients pulse (fingers on wrist to feel the state of the inner organs) and the tongue (certain colours, textures etc. denote certain internal patterns). The client is then given an assessment of their pattern, and at this point they are offered diet and lifestyle information and articles, and Mikiala discusses how many treatments and what blend of treatments she recommends.

Hormones: Various organs are affected during hormonal disruptions: commonly, the liver, spleen and pancreas are affected. Some of the symptoms of liver stagnation can include *excessive* symptoms like breast distention and high blood pressure. If spleen function is deficient, this can result in heavy bleeding and middle-weight gain. Kidney deficiency is related to the adrenal glands and can be taxed during hormone shifts.



Chinese Herbs for Menopause—in more detail

One of the main reasons that menopause negatively affects women is the decline of estrogen production by the ovaries. Other systems compensate for this estrogenic decline. The adrenal glands and fat cells will produce estrogens or estrogen pre-cursors but sometimes our adrenal glands are depleted. Stress, poor diet, and illness can deplete our bodies' further, making menopause a more intense and negative experience.

Chinese medicine has been well documented to help a woman's body produce estrogen and to regulate her hormones. Acupuncture works by stimulating her adrenal glands and by calming her sympathetic nervous response (Fight or Flight response). Calming the nervous system and stimulating the adrenal glands allows her body to produce the necessary hormones. Night sweats can be notably declined and alleviated.

Chinese herbal formulas such as Rehmannia Six or Rehmannia Eight Formula (Liu wei di huang or Zhi bai di huang) has been found to balance female hormones by increasing serum estrogen levels and by lowering follicular stimulating hormone (FSH) and luteinizing hormone (LH) (Jinhuang, Z 1997: 3 (4):242-245). These formulas can also increase activated Vitamin D which can help women suffering from osteoporosis (Yanping, C et al; 1994: 14(1)).

Rehmannia (shu di huang or sheng di huang) contains iridoid glycosides which have been found to be effective in the stimulation of estrogen production. The main function of iridoid glycosides is to stimulate the production of adrenal cortical hormones which are hormones involved in the production of sex hormones.

It is important to stimulate the body to regulate itself rather than solely relying upon synthetic hormones to trick the body into thinking that it has produced these hormones. Aside from acupuncture and herbs, at our clinic we will also look at nutrition, supplements and lifestyle to help you achieve hormonal balance.

Are Chinese herbs safe?

Yes. Chinese herbal medicines are very safe when prescribed correctly by a properly trained practitioner. Over the centuries doctors have compiled detailed information about the pharmacopoeia and placed great emphasis on the protection of the patient. Allergic type reactions are rare, and will cause no lasting damage if treatment is stopped as soon as symptoms appear.

What kind of herbs are offered at Health Within? Powders, capsules and tinctures. Jeff and Mikiala will often start a client off on powders first, which are customized for the client on site. Contrary to popular belief, the herbs consist of roots and tubers, and don't animal parts! There are also tablet and tincture options if powders are too strong for the client. One of Mikiala's favourite and often prescribed tinctures is ***Calm Dragon*** which she says helps to clear liver stagnation, a common problem in women and hormones during peri-menopause and menopause and help with anxiety as well.

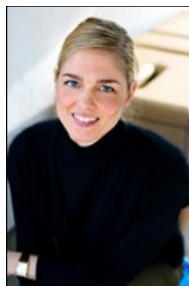
Acupuncture: A large part of their work at the clinic is the use of acupuncture, which consists of tiny needles inserted into various parts of the body, to restore function and allow the energy (Chi) to flow freely.

As a long-time user of acupuncture, I can attest to acupuncture's effectiveness in treating muscle pain, skeletal pain and overall fatigue. It's an excellent addition to a client's health protocol and can help improve muscular fitness and athletic ability because it can help maintain and strengthen the muscles' firing capacity. Jeff uses Motor Point therapy for this-it re-sets the muscle to normal resting length which allows it to fire efficiently and improves the synergy between muscle groups.

For more information, please visit www.healthwithin.ca. (Check out their **Health Tips** section to download tips and fill out a health questionnaire!)



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