

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WESTERN MEDICINE AND ORIENTAL MEDICINE?

Oriental Medicine—which includes the use of exercise, nutrition, Acupuncture, Chinese herbs and massage—has been developing for thousands of years. Although the medicine may seem complex, it is a truly simple art and science to understand if one grasps logical, basic concepts regarding the simplicity of the body. Its view of the body is different than conventional Western Medicine in four ways:

1. In conventional Western Medicine, the symptom alone is diagnosed and treated; in Oriental Medicine, the underlying cause of a person's symptom is diagnosed and treated to *resolve* the symptom.
2. In conventional Western Medicine, the *quantities* of bodily substances (for example, the number of liver enzymes in the blood stream) and images of the body's internal parts (for example, x-rays or MRIs) are the most important diagnostic tools used; in Oriental Medicine, *qualities* and relationships between systems in the body are the most important tools used. For example, mental stress can decrease liver function, causing the liver to negatively affect the heart, which may constrict the blood vessels, in turn leading to high blood pressure. In contrast, the point of view of conventional Western Medicine is simply that "stress" causes high blood pressure without understanding *why* the high blood pressure exists, only that the *symptom* of high blood pressure exists.
3. Conventional Western Medicine is unsurpassed in the diagnosis of health problems; however, it is often unable to effectively resolve chronic conditions. Conventional Western Medicine is most useful in the treatment of acute, crisis situations, whereas Oriental Medicine is excellent in the diagnosis and treatment of long-term, chronic problems. Additionally, many acute conditions may benefit from immediate Oriental Medical treatment (for example ankle sprains heal rapidly if treated in the first two weeks following the injury.)
4. Conventional Western Medicine views the body as static and unchanging; Oriental Medicine views the body as dynamic and capable of change in many ways. For example, it is common for a doctor to say, "You have diabetes and you'll have to live with it." An acupuncturist may say, "Let's fix the spleen/pancreatic system so that the body gets more insulin to improve the diabetes."

Excerpt from: the soon-to-be released book *Oriental Medicine and You*. Curry Chaudoir, Diplomate in Acupuncture