



Cultural Customs

There are some cultural customs used as home remedies to cure or relieve the symptoms of some ailments such as:

- Backache
- Itchy skin
- Flu Symptoms

These practices are primarily seen in Southeast Asian cultures, but some are also used by Russian immigrants and Latin-American families. These practices are usually performed by a trained practitioner. From culture to culture, these remedies have different names and the process differs slightly.

These are some of the healing practices used which leave marks on the body and may be confused with child abuse.

- Coining
- Cupping
- Pinching
- Suctioning

Coining

- Coining is one of the most commonly practiced remedy methods.
- The chest, back, shoulders and neck are massaged with a medicated ointment such as Ben-Gay.
- The skin is then “rubbed” in a downward, linear fashion with the edge of a copper coin, or silver spoon until dark lines appear.
- This treatment leaves marks for several days which gives the appearance of having been struck with a stick or whip.
- The lines, or what appears to be bruising, is due to blood coming to the surface of the skin, from the heat and pressure of the coin being rubbed on the body.

Cupping

- Cupping is performed on the chest, back, abdomen, and/or back of legs for pain, and the forehead and temples for headaches.
- The inside of a glass container or cup, about the size of a baby food jar, is lightly coated with rubbing alcohol.
- The glass is held upside down, and a lit match, candle or lighter is held under it in order to burn off the oxygen. This creates a vacuum.
- The cup is quickly placed on the skin and the vacuum effect draws the skin up.
- Blood is drawn to the surface of the skin and a round mark is left which might look like a bruise.
- These marks may remain of the body for several days.

Pinching

- The area between the eyebrows, upper nose and temples are pinched to relieve headaches.
- The pressure from the pinching leaves the area reddened and may give the appearance of having been struck.

Air Suctioning

- To relieve headaches, the cut end of a bull or goat horn is placed on the patient's forehead and/or temples.
- Through a small hole bored in the pointed end of the horn, the practitioner sucks the air out of the horn.
- The horn sticks to the site and the hole is then plugged with wax.
- The horn is left on the forehead for 10 to 15 minutes.
- Blood is drawn to the surface of the skin and a round mark is left after the horn is removed, which looks like a bruise.
- These marks may remain on the body for several days.

Two Cultural Practices Which Should Be Reported

- Stick Burns and Moxibustion
- Hair Pulling

Stick Burns and Moxibustion

These remedies and other similar remedies are used in certain cultures to relieve a variety of symptoms such as fever and abdominal pain. These are related to acupuncture, however, they cause a circular cigarette-tip size burn.

- A stick similar to an incense stick is lit and placed on the palms of the hands, soles of feet and genital area. In some cultures, a hollow bamboo stick stuffed with cotton is lit and then extinguished.
- Moxa herbs or yarn are rolled into a pea-sized ball and placed on the skin. The ball is then lit and allowed to burn to the point of pain.
- It should be reported so that the caretaker may be educated on what are acceptable practices and alternative treatments.

Hair Pulling

- This home remedy is to relieve headache pain. The hair is pulled, and if too much force is used, the hair may be pulled out of the scalp.