

Natural Care of Arthritic Conditions

How essential oils, herbs, TCM and nutrition can help

Arthritis, What is it?

- Arthritis is not a single disease; it is an informal way of referring to joint pain or joint disease
- There are more than 100 types of arthritis and related conditions.
- From Greek: “arthron” is joint and “itis” is inflammation
- Common symptoms include swelling, pain, stiffness and decreased range of motion.



History

An interesting factoid

Evidence of osteoarthritis and potentially inflammatory arthritis has been discovered in dinosaurs. The first known traces of human arthritis date back as far as 4500 BC. In early reports, arthritis was frequently referred to as the most common ailment of prehistoric peoples. Evidence of arthritis has been found worldwide throughout history, including the Egyptian mummies circa 2590 BC



Types of Arthritis

There are many more...

- **Degenerative Arthritis**

Osteoarthritis is the most common type of arthritis. When the cartilage wears away, bone rubs against bone, causing pain, swelling and stiffness. Over time, joints can lose strength and pain may become chronic.

- **Immune-modulated Arthritis**

A healthy immune system is protective. It generates internal inflammation to get rid of infection and prevent disease. But with inflammatory types of arthritis, the immune system doesn't work properly and mistakenly attacks the joints with uncontrolled inflammation, potentially causing joint erosion. Inflammation can also cause damage to internal organs, eyes and other parts of the body.

- **Infectious Arthritis**

A bacterium, virus or fungus can enter the joint and trigger inflammation. Examples of organisms that can infect joints are salmonella and shigella (food poisoning or contamination), lyme disease, bartonella. In many cases, timely treatment with antibiotics may clear the joint infection, but sometimes the arthritis becomes chronic.

- **Traumatic Arthritis**

Arthritic changes brought about by trauma or injury, this definition includes septic arthritis



Degenerative Arthritis

(Osteoarthritis)

Osteoarthritis is the most common type of arthritis, affecting multiple joints. In most cases of osteoarthritis, the cause of pain is the constant and abnormal rubbing within the joints due to joint instability.

Healthy joints are covered with a thin layer of smooth cartilage which acts as a natural joint lubricant when the joints rub back and forth. This lubricant naturally wears down with age or can be damaged by trauma. If this layer of cartilage is damaged, the bones and joints rub together painfully. In addition, the constant friction causes new bone growth to develop around the joints, which causes stiffness and limits joint movement. This additional bone growth is known as bone spurs

Contributing factors: old age, trauma, over-exercise, obesity



Immune Modulated

In autoimmune arthritis, the immune system identifies proteins which are naturally present in the body as antigens. These proteins are attacked, leading to inflammation and pain. Over time, repeated immune attacks can lead to degeneration of joints and connective tissue, which can contribute to deformities

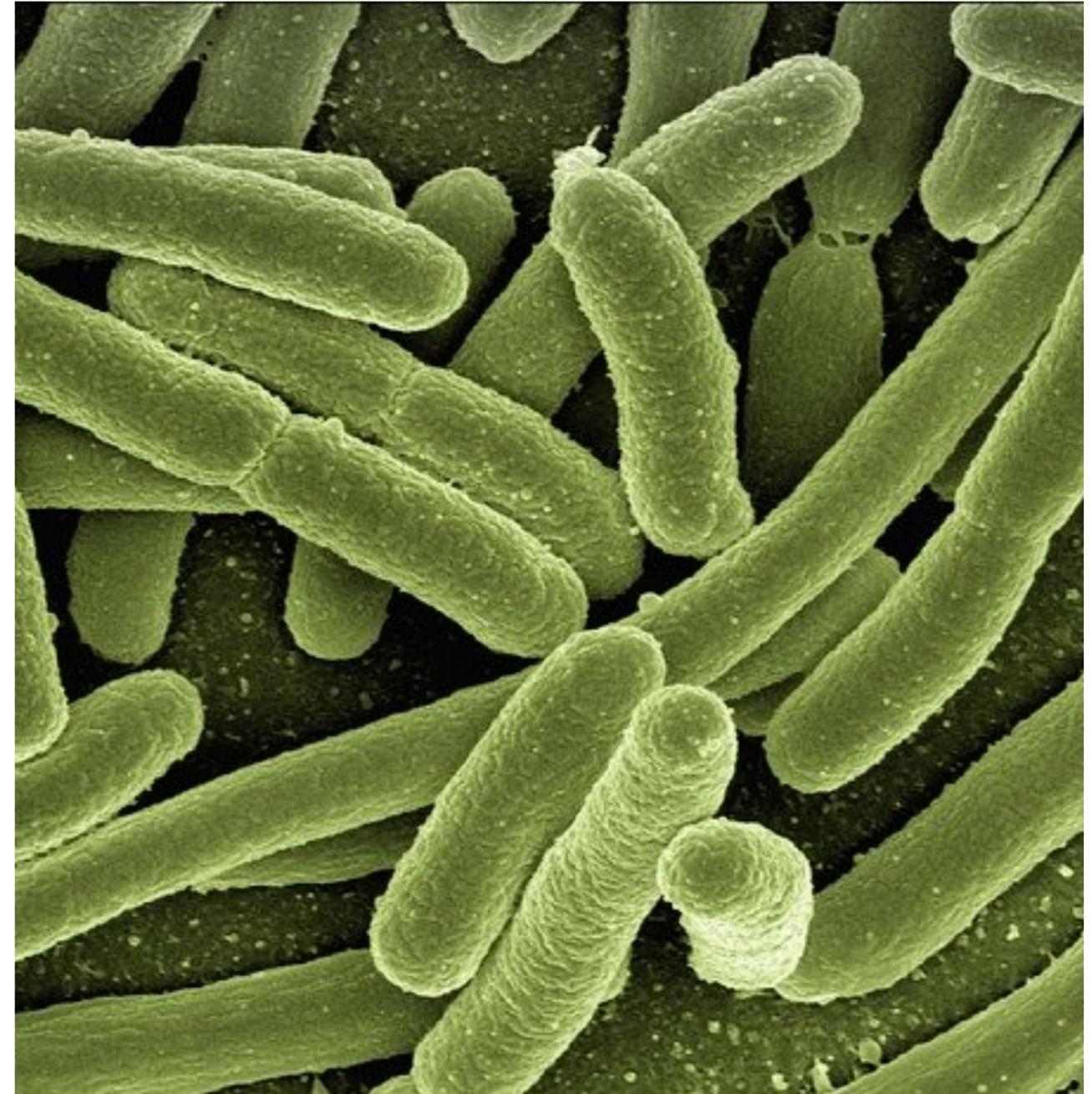
Contributing factors:

- Genetic
- Vaccinations
- Stress
- Diet



Infectious

- Lyme
- Bartonella
- Shigella
- Viruses
- Injury causing bacterial invasion
 - After spreading through the bloodstream from another part of the body, such as the lungs during pneumonia
 - Through a nearby wound
 - After surgery, an injection or trauma



Conventional treatment

- **Pain relief** - NSAIDs, corticosteroids
- **Nutritional supplements** - glucosamine, chondroitin, msm
- **Exercise** - hydrotherapy, physiotherapy
- **CBD**



How TCM views arthritis

- From the perspective of Traditional Chinese Medicine, arthritis and joint pain are considered as blockage in the flow of qi and blood throughout pathways in the body, known as 'Bi'.
- Bi-syndrome, indicates that our defensive energy (wei qi) has become weak. When our defenses are down atmospheric conditions can penetrate and influence our bodies, obstructing flow and causing pain or stiffness, and various illnesses
- The blockage can be caused by these “external pathogens” - wind, cold, dampness and heat - that invade the body and enter into the joints.
- Liver Not Smoothing the Qi A function of the “Liver “, in Chinese medicine, is to insure the smooth qi flow. When damage to this organ occurs, its ability to insure smooth flow of qi may be impaired. When qi flow is impaired, pain results. Since the Liver also governs the joints and tendons, various Liver patterns can result in pain in the joints and tendons. The Chinese diagnosis in these cases are deficiencies of the Liver and Kidneys.
- In Chinese medicine, there are many patterns of arthritis in TCM terms. The most common patterns are wind, cold and dampness, which is why arthritis tends to aggravate in cold and wet weather.



What's the weather like?

Four kinds are recognized, Hot-bi, Cold-bi, Damp-bi, and Windy-bi.

Windy Bi - pain which moves from joint to joint. Movement of joints is limited, and there is often fever. Possible sudden onset (Infectious)

Cold Bi - severe pain in a joint or muscle. This pain has a fixed location. Movement of joints is limited. (Osteoarthritis) worse in winter, better with warming. Moxibustion (warming the area or affected channels with heat from smoldering mugwort) is often used as a therapy for this type of bi syndrome.

Hot-bi is usually diagnosed as rheumatoid arthritis. Putting heat on such an inflamed joint makes it feel worse.

Damp Bi - pain, soreness and swelling in muscles and joints, with a feeling of heaviness and numbness in the limbs. The pain has a fixed location. Feels worse in damp weather, better for warm poultice

TCM treatments

Treatment involves expelling and countering the pathogenic influence, relieving pain, and boosting the outer defensive Wei Qi.

Acupuncture/pressure

The relief of arthritis pain using acupuncture has been studied by researchers from all over the world. Acupuncture points to ease arthritic pain are located all over the body, not just over the affected area.

Herbs

A TCM practitioner will prescribe herbs to warm and dry, such as turmeric

Diet

An emphasis on warm food, neither too hot or too cold.



Acupressure points

Forelegs

Points (A) — Crooked Pond

Location: On the upper edge of the elbow crease. Benefits: Relieves arthritic pain, especially in the elbow and shoulder.

Points (B) — Outer Gate

Location: Two and one-half finger widths above the wrist crease on the outer forearm midway between the two bones of the arm. Benefits: Relieves rheumatism, tendonitis, wrist pain, and shoulder pain.

Points (C) — Joining the Valley

Caution: This point is forbidden for pregnant women until labor because its stimulation can cause premature contractions in the uterus.

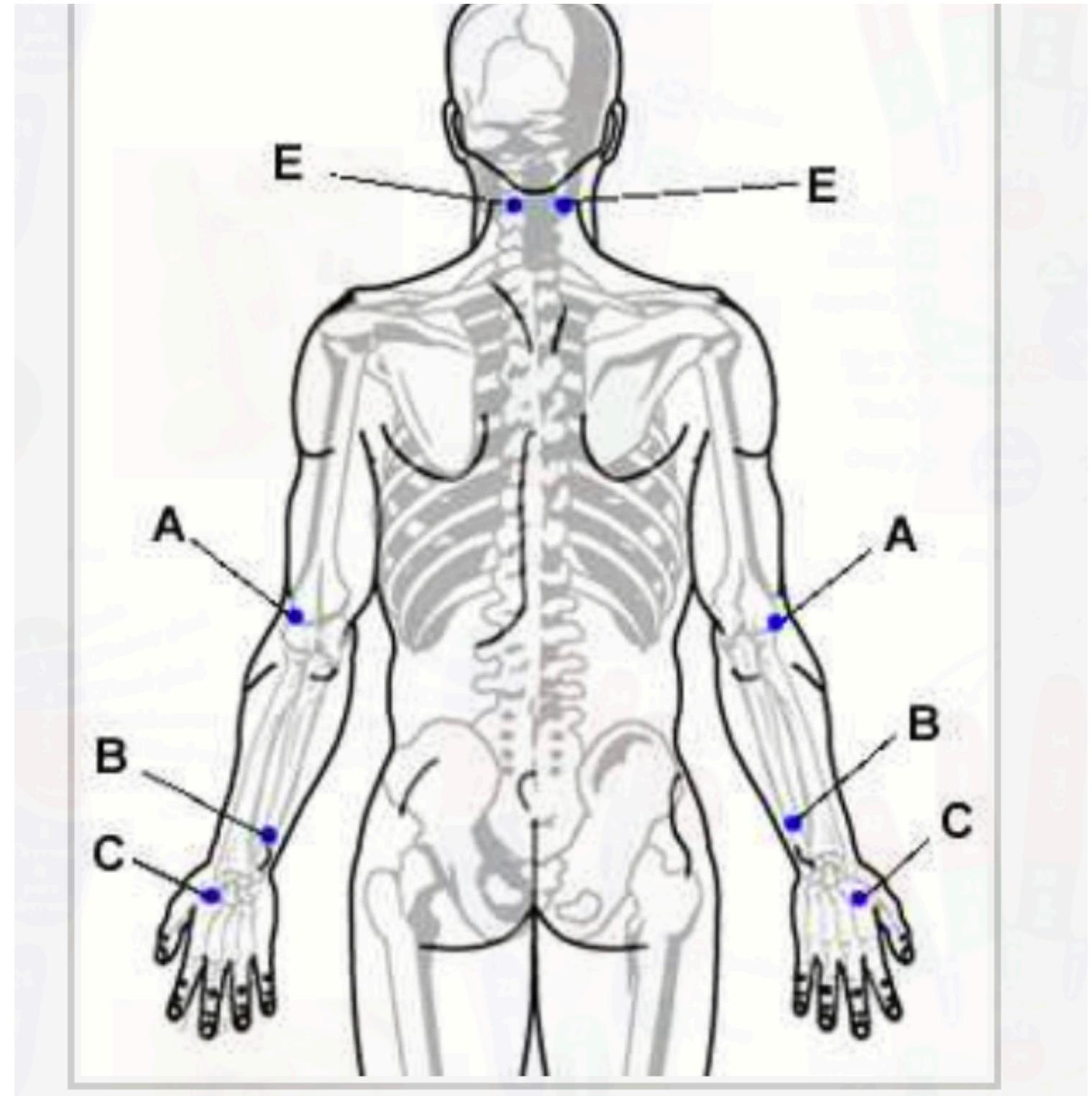
Location: In the webbing between the thumb and index finger at the highest spot of the muscle when the thumb and index finger are brought close together.

Benefits: Relieves pain and inflammation in the hand, wrist, elbow, shoulder, and neck.

Points (E) — Gates of Consciousness

Location: Below the base of the skull, in the hollow between the two large, vertical neck muscles, two to three inches apart depending on the size of the head.

Benefits: Relieves arthritis, as well as the following common complaints that often accompany arthritic pain: headaches, insomnia, stiff neck, neck pain, fatigue, and general irritability.



Acupressure

Hind legs

[Click here for a video of acupoints and how to find them](#)

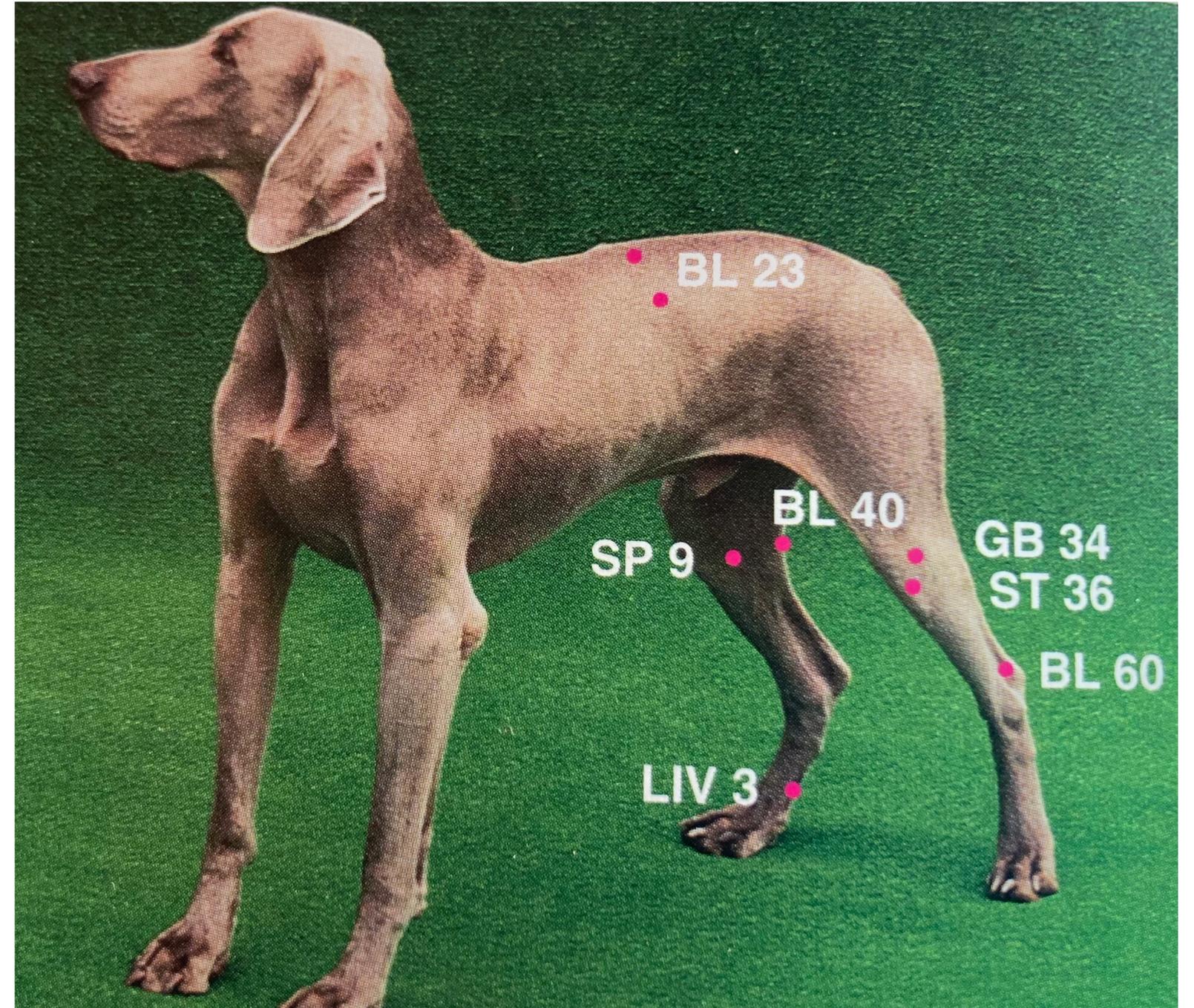


Photo credit: Four Paws Five Directions, Cheryl Schwartz

Natural Support

What else we can do to help our animals

- Nutrition
- Exercise
- Herbs
- Essential Oils
- Reduce stress



Essential Oils/Hydrosols

A small selection

Offer for self-selection. You can also blend in aloe-gel for topical application.

Hydrosols are best for long-term support

- **Ginger** (*Zingiber Officinale*), warm, analgesic, stimulant, good for “Eeyore” types. You can also use tea.
- **Plai** (*Zingiber cassumnar Roxb.*) analgesic, anti-neuralgic, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, antispasmodic.
- **Juniperberry** (*Juniperus communis*) analgesic, diuretic, breaks down uric acid
- **Peppermint** (*mentha piperita*) analgesic, anti-inflammatory, stimulant
- **German Chamomile** (*Matricaria recutita*), moves “bi”, anti-inflammatory, sedative
- **Bladderwrack** (*Fucus fesciculosa*) antiarthritic/rheumatic, anti-inflammatory, “gets things moving”
- **Violet Leaf** (*Viola odorata*) Analgesic (mild), anti-inflammatory, antirheumatic, comforts the heart,



Case study

Seaweed for an arthritic cat

Emmie was an 18 year old cat with mild renal disease and arthritis. She selected seaweed absolute diluted to 1% in a base oil. She was offered the oil twice a day and she inhaled it, often going into a trance for a few minutes. She never wanted to lick it. Her initial interest was over 11 days, although her owner continued to offer it to her on a daily basis after that, when she took occasional interest as and when she needed it. During the period of initial interest Emmie's appetite improved and she became much less picky about what she would eat. Her coat became silky and shiny and the matts that she wouldn't let her owner groom out came away easily. Her mobility improved, with her back becoming less hunched and her back legs straighter when walking or standing. At the time of treatment Emmie had adopted the space behind the TV on her owner's kitchen counter as her sleeping place. She got there by jumping onto a chair, then the kitchen table, and then the counter top. As Emmie's owner was less than keen to have a cat sleeping on her kitchen worktops she removed the chair to prevent access, but Emmie quickly sorted that out by jumping directly onto the table, something she hadn't been able to do for a very long time.

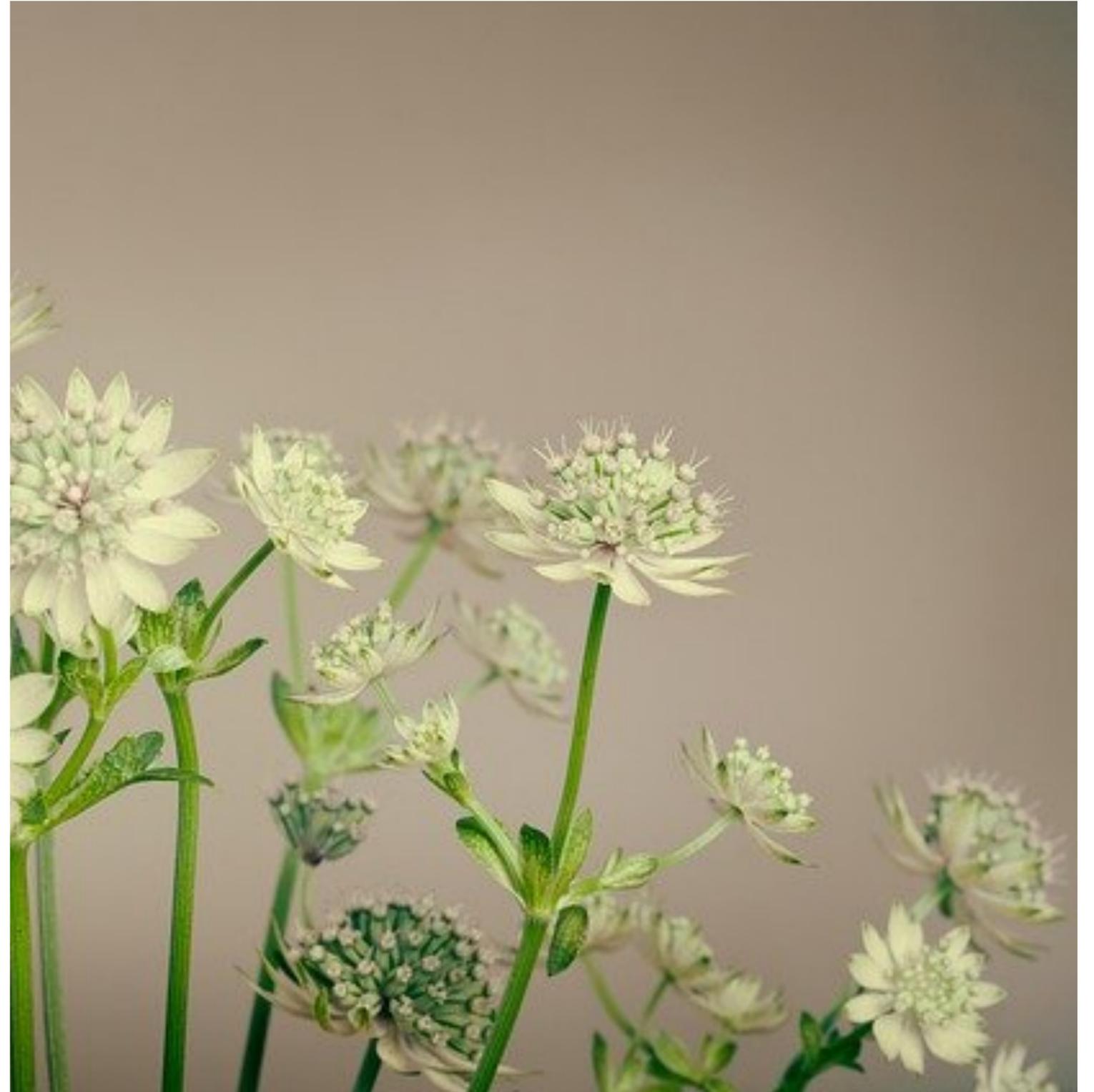
Emmie continued to benefit from her Seaweed oil for a further 6 months. She was quietly put to sleep in early September when her kidney disease became too much for her to cope with. Emmie's owner is very happy with her quality of life over the last summer that she had with her, and that it didn't involve pain relieving injections or tablets supplied by the vet (stressful for all concerned, Emmie was a little sod about taking medication!), just simply the opportunity to inhale an essential oil if she needed it.



Herbs

Offer for self-selection regularly.

- Devil's claw
- Meadowsweet
- Willow Bark
- Cleavers
- Hypericum macerate
- Spirulina
- Rosehip
- Hawthorn
- Turmeric



Nutrition

A very quick word

- Major cause of inflammatory conditions
- Metabolic syndrome
- Reduce inflammatory foods simple carbs, grains, sugars, excess anything, poor quality fats
- Add supplements omega 3, krill oil, hemp oil, flax, berries, seeds, mineral balance, chondroitin, glucosamine, msm



And that's it for Now!

Any questions?