



MINISTRY OF HEALTH
SINGAPORE

MH 34:24/8

2 May 2020

All registered TCM practitioners

MOH CIRCULAR 111/2020

UPDATE ON ESSENTIAL TCM SERVICES FOR EXTENDED COVID-19 CIRCUIT BREAKER PERIOD (5 MAY 2020 – 1 JUNE 2020)

In line with the circuit breaker measures announced by the Multi-Ministry Task force on 3 April 2020, all non-essential TCM services and treatment should be deferred from 7 April onwards, while essential TCM services¹ (limited to TCM consultation and herbal treatment) can be continued. On 21 April 2020, the task force announced the extension of the circuit breaker period for 4 weeks, till 1 June 2020 (inclusive), to further reduce the risk of local transmission of COVID-19.

Continued Provision of Essential TCM Services

2. With the extension, the Ministry of Health (MOH) recognise that some patients, especially those who rely on acupuncture for pain management, might not be able to defer their acupuncture treatment further. Nevertheless, it is important to balance patients' needs against the larger public health concern of the nation and the risk of potential exposure of patients to COVID-19 infections. Hence, after careful consideration, from 5 May 2020 till 1 June 2020, **TCM needle acupuncture will be allowed for pain management only (excluding cupping, moxibustion, guasha and tuina manipulative therapies), if assessed by the TCM practitioner (TCMP) to be essential.**

¹ Essential TCM services / treatment refer to those, if not provided or performed, would result in significant or rapid deterioration of the patient's medical condition, and potentially threatening their health and well-being.



3. The provision of TCM needle acupuncture for pain management will be allowed, with the following restrictions:

- i. Only TCMPs in TCM clinics and those co-located within a TCM medical hall with dedicated treatment rooms can offer acupuncture treatment;
- ii. TCMPs must only perform acupuncture treatment on one patient at any one time i.e. no concurrent treatment of patients even in separate rooms;
- iii. Acupuncture treatment should be restricted to once a week per patient on appointment basis. Each session should not exceed 45 minutes; and
- iv. Masks must be worn by both TCMPs and patients throughout the acupuncture treatment session. TCMPs must also observe proper infection control guidelines as prescribed in Annex A.

4. Needle acupuncture **must not** be offered to any patient who:

- i. fulfils the suspect case definition²; or
- ii. presents with fever, any respiratory symptoms or loss of smell; or
- iii. on Quarantine Order or Stay Home Notice;
- iv. are foreign workers living in congregated settings.

5. TCMPs are reminded that only essential TCM services, limited to TCM consultation, herbal medication and needle acupuncture, are allowed during this extended circuit breaker period. In addition, provision of TCM services as adjuvant treatment to patients with, e.g. cancer and chronic conditions is allowed. Please see Annex B for some examples of essential TCM services and non-essential TCM services.

² (a) A person with clinical signs and symptoms suggestive of Community-Acquired Pneumonia or community-acquired severe respiratory infection with breathlessness.

(b) A person with an acute respiratory illness of any degree of severity (e.g. symptoms of cough, sore throat, runny nose, anosmia), with or without fever, who, within 14 days before onset of illness had:

- (i) Travelled abroad (outside Singapore); OR
- (ii) Close contact with a case of COVID-19 infection; OR
- (iii) Stayed in a foreign worker dormitory.

6. TCMPs who wish to practice during this period are reminded to submit to the Ministry of Health (MOH) only one place of practice and declare that you abide to provide the TCM treatment and for conditions stipulated only. TCMPs who have submitted previously do not need to re-submit. Failure to comply with these requirements will render the TCMPs liable for prosecution under the Infectious Disease Act (IDA) and TCMP Act.

7. Please follow the below link or scan the QR code to submit the declaration, if you have not done so.



www.go.gov.sg/moh-covid19-tcm-es-declaration

8. TCMPs should maintain proper documentation and contact log of all patients to facilitate contact tracing, if necessary. Please see Annex C for a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs).

Staff Management

9. All providers must make specific operational plans to reduce the number of staff who do not need to be based on-site. For example, backroom office staff should tele-commute as far as possible. Physical counter services should be scaled down, and substituted with digital services where possible.

10. All providers must also implement strict safe distancing and infection prevention and control measures to reduce close interaction and mingling between staff, during and after allowed operating hours. These measures will reduce the risk of cross-infection in the clinics.

11. MTI also requested for all essential services to register every individual who needs to commute to work. All TCM providers are required to put in place a daily movement log to track all employees' entry and exit times, and furnish the information to MTI upon request. This is intended to support contact tracing efforts. Alternatively, you may use SafeEntry on <http://go.gov.sg/safeentry> to track employees' attendance.



12. For clarification on this circular, please email MOH_INFO@moh.gov.sg



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INFECTION CONTROL GUIDELINES

TCMPs must comply with all infection control practices prescribed in the “General Advisory on Good Clinical Practice and Infection Control for TCM Practice (2020)” when providing essential TCM services to patients.

In particular, the following infection control practices must be observed when performing needle acupuncture.

- i. Hand hygiene must be strictly observed.
- ii. Surgical masks, gloves and other protective gear (e.g. disposable gowns when appropriate) must be used when performing all acupuncture treatment.
- iii. Proper disposal of used acupuncture needles and all other wastes.
- iv. Maintain a clean work environment.

ESSENTIAL TCM SERVICES

1. Essential TCM services / treatment refer to those, if not provided or performed, would result in significant or rapid deterioration of the patient's medical condition, and potentially threatening their health and well-being.
2. Adjuvant treatment to patients with e.g. cancer and chronic conditions with recent relapses and/or poor control, limited to TCM consultation, herbal treatment and needle acupuncture only.
3. For follow-up of patients with stable chronic conditions, switch to tele-consult and medicine delivery, where possible. This should be done in accordance with section 4.1.1 para (c) of the TCMP Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines (ECEG) on remote consultations in continuing care.

PLEASE NOTE: Patients with flu-like symptoms such as fever, sore throat, runny nose and cough are to be referred to Public Health Preparedness Clinics (PHPC) to focus our primary care efforts to better detect and manage COVID-19 infections.

NON-ESSENTIAL TCM SERVICES

1. Aesthetic and wellness services, including but not limited to, weight-loss management and hair growth treatment
2. Rehab and therapy services which are maintenance in nature
3. Management of patients with stable sports injury or related condition
4. Management of patients with stable skin conditions who are on long-term follow up

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Restrictions on TCM practice

Q1: Why must the provision of needle acupuncture be restricted to pain management only?

A1: With the extension of the circuit breaker period, we recognise that some patients may not be able to defer their acupuncture treatment, especially patients who rely only on acupuncture treatment for pain relief.

Q2: Am I allowed to provide needle acupuncture for conditions like lower backache, neck pain, frozen shoulder and carpal tunnel syndrome where patients experience varying degrees of pain associated with such conditions?

Q2: It should only be performed after the TCMP assessed that the acupuncture treatment is urgent and cannot be deferred for a month.

Q3: Can I perform TCM acupuncture in TCM medical halls?

A3: TCM acupuncture can only be performed in a dedicated treatment room in TCM medical halls. Those without a dedicated treatment room for acupuncture treatment can only offer TCM consultation and herbal dispensing over the counter.

Q4: Can I perform TCM acupuncture for different patients concurrently in different treatment rooms?

A4: There can only be one patient receiving acupuncture treatment in a treatment room, and no concurrent treatment of patients even in separate rooms.

Q5: What if acupuncture is part of my adjuvant therapy to cancer patients or patients with chronic conditions?

A5: Only needle acupuncture (excluding cupping, moxibustion, guasha and tuina manipulative therapies) can be performed for conditions that require acupuncture as part of pain management.

Q6: Am I allowed to make house calls to deliver essential TCM services?

A6: In line with the government's directive for everyone to reduce house visits, TCM house calls will NOT be allowed.

Q7: What chronic conditions am I allowed to see?

A7: You may continue to treat medical conditions which your patients have consulted you on a regular basis (for a period of more than 3 months or at least one course of TCM treatment), before this period.

However, as long as the patient's condition is stable and immediate TCM consultation and herbal treatment are not essential, you should defer their treatment or switch to tele-consult and medicine delivery, where possible, in accordance with TCMP ECEG on remote consultations in continuing care.

Declaration of provision of essential TCM services by TCMPs

Q8: Must I declare again if I have previously received approval from MOH and MTI to provide only essential TCM services?

A8: You do not need to declare again, if you have previously submitted and declared.

Q9: Must I declare if I would like to perform acupuncture during this period?

A9: You do not need to submit a separate declaration to perform acupuncture, if you have previously submitted and declared to provide only essential TCM services.

Q10: What if patients come to me for non-essential TCM consultation and treatment?

A10: You should explain the rationale of such a restriction and advise them to defer such consultation and treatment.

Q11: Why am I allowed to practice at one place only?

A11: To minimise infection risk and cross-institutional transmission of COVID-19, TCMPs who wish to practice during this period for the delivery of essential TCM services are allowed to do so only at one place of practice.

Q12: What will happen if I do not declare and I continue to practice TCM, business as usual?

A12: Failure to comply will render the TCMPs liable for prosecution under the Infectious Disease Act (IDA) and TCMP Act.

TCM medical halls

Q13: Can TCM medical halls remain open during this period?

A13: TCM medical halls with registered TCMPs can remain open to provide essential TCM services (limited to TCM consultations, herbal medication and needle acupuncture.) Needle acupuncture can only be provided if there is/are dedicated treatment room(s) co-located within the TCM medical hall.

Q14: Are TCM medical halls allowed to sell their retail products?

A14: TCM medical halls with registered TCMPs on site to provide essential TCM service are also allowed to sell their retail products; but the number of retail staff must be kept to a minimum and strict safe distancing measures implemented and complied with.



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致：中医注册执业者

卫生部通告 **111/2020**

COVID-19 阻断措施延长期间（2020年5月4日至2020年6月1日）有关中医必要服务的通知

根据多部门工作小组于2020年4月3日宣布的2019冠状病毒疾病(COVID-19)阻断措施，所有非必要的中医服务和治疗都必须从2020年4月7日暂停或推迟，但必要的中医服务¹（只限于中医诊断和中药治疗）则可以继续。在2020年4月21日，多部门工作小组宣布延长病毒阻断措施期，为期四周，至2020年6月1日(包括)，以进一步减少COVID-19在本地传播的风险。

持续提供必要的中医服务

2 随着阻断措施的延长，卫生部意识到一些病人，尤其是那些依靠针灸作为疼痛管理的病人，可能无法进一步推迟针灸治疗。尽管如此，卫生部必须在考虑病人的需求的同时与国家更大的公共卫生问题取得平衡，以及患者可能接触到COVID-19病毒而受感染的风险。因此，经过慎重的考虑，从2020年5月5日至2020年6月1日，在中医师评估后并认为有必要的基础上，允许使用中医针刺疗法（不包括拔罐，灸法，刮痧和推拿治疗）为病人进行疼痛管理。

3 采用中医针刺进行疼痛管理必须在以下限制下进行：

¹ 必要的中医药服务或治疗指的是若停止服务或治疗后将导致病人的病情急剧恶化，并可能威胁到他们的健康。

- i. 只有在中医诊所和设有专用治疗室的药材店驻诊的中医师能提供针刺治疗；
- ii. 中医师为病人进行针刺治疗的整个过程中只限于一名病人，即使在不同的诊室也不能在同一时间为多名病人进行针刺治疗；
- iii. 每名病人的针刺治疗应限于一周一次。每次的治疗不应超过 45 分钟；以及
- iv. 在中医针刺治疗过程中，中医师和病人都必须戴上口罩。中医师也必须遵守附件 A中所规定的良好临床实践与感染控制的指导原则。

4 中医师不能为下列病人提供针刺治疗：

- i. 符合疑似病例定义者²；或
- ii. 出现发烧、任何呼吸道症状或嗅觉缺失者；或
- iii. 正在履行居家通知令或隔离令者；或
- iv. 住在集体居住环境的外籍客工。

5 卫生部欲提醒中医师，在这个延长阻断措施的期间，只能提供必要的中医服务（只限于中医诊断、中药和针刺）。此外，也允许中医辅助治疗，给予在近日病情反复或控制不良；例如：患有癌症或慢性疾病的病人。（请参阅附件 B：必要中医药服务和非必要的中医药服务的例子）

6 有意在这段期间执业的中医师必须向卫生部申报一个执业地点，并声明遵守所规定的中医治疗方法和条件。之前已申报的中医师无需重新提交。若违反此规定，中医师将可能在传染病法令（IDA）和中医注册法令（TCMP Act）下被起诉。

² (a) 具疑似社区获得性肺炎的临床体征和症状或严重呼吸道感染伴呼吸急促的人士。

(b) 患有任何严重程度的急性呼吸道疾病（如咳嗽、喉咙痛、流鼻涕、嗅觉缺失），不论是否发烧，在患病前的 14 天内曾：

- i. 到国外旅行（在新加坡境外）；或
- ii. 与 COVID-19 感染个案有密切接触；或
- iii. 住在客工宿舍。

7 未申报的中医师，请通过以下链接或扫描 QR 码申报及提交声明。



www.go.gov.sg/moh-covid19-tcm-es-declaration

8 中医师应该为所有病患保持相关记录和联络方式，以便在必要时追查密切接触者。（请参阅附件 C：常见问题解答）

职员管理

9 所有提供中医必要服务的机构都必须制定具体的业务计划，以减少需要在店面工作的职员。例如，后勤办公室职员应尽可能远程办公。实质的柜台服务应该减少，并尽可能以数码服务取代。

10 所有中医服务提供者也必须实施严谨的安全距离和感染预防和控制措施，并减少职员在工作时间内和下班后的密切接触和互动。这些措施将减少交叉感染的风险。

11 贸工部也要求所有必要服务提供者注册每一名需要通勤的人员。所有提供中医必要服务的机构都必须制定每日运作日志，记录所有员工出入岗位的时间，并在贸工部要求时提供相关资料。这些措施是为了支持追查密切接触者的工作。中医师也可以使用 SafeEntry <http://go.gov.sg/safeentry> 追踪员工出勤情况。

12 若对此通告有疑问，请发送电邮至 MOH_INFO@moh.gov.sg



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以上文件以英语原文为准



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感染控制指导原则

在提供中医必要服务时，中医师必须遵守“中医行业的良好临床实践与传染控制的一般咨询”所规定的所有感染控制措施。

尤其是针刺时，必须注意以下的感染控制措施。

- i. 必须严格遵守双手的卫生。
- ii. 在进行所有针刺治疗时，必须使用手术口罩、手套和其他防护用具（例如：适当时使用防护服）
- iii. 妥善处置使用过的针具和其他废物。
- iv. 保持清洁的工作环境。

必要的中医药服务

1. 必要的中医药服务或治疗指的是：停止服务或治疗后将导致病人的病情急剧恶化，并可能威胁到他们的健康。
2. 中医辅助治疗（限于中医诊断、中药和针刺）给予在近日病情反复或控制不良例如：患有癌症或慢性疾病的病人。
3. 若情况允许，稳定的慢性疾病管理可通过远程咨询会诊和药物快递进行。中医师应该遵守“中医执业者道德准则及道德指导原则”中关于远程延续诊疗的条文 4.1.1 (c) 段进行。

请注意：患有类似感冒症状（如发烧、喉咙痛、流鼻涕、咳嗽等）的病人都应该转诊到公共卫生防范诊所（PHPC），以集中基层护理的资源来更好地检测和管理 COVID-19 感染。

非必要的中医服务

1. 美容和保健服务，如减肥、护发生发治疗等
2. 维持性的康复治疗
3. 稳定运动损伤的管理
4. 稳定且长期跟进的皮肤病

常见问题解答

对中医服务的限制

问 1：为什么针刺只限于疼痛管理？

答 1：随着阻断措施的延长，卫生部意识到一些病人，尤其是那些仅能依靠针刺作为缓解疼痛症状的病人，可能无法进一步推迟针灸治疗。

问 2：我可以为患有腰痛、颈项疼痛、五十肩和腕管综合征等疾病并呈现不同程度的疼痛症状的患者提供针刺治疗吗？

答 2：中医师应该在评估针刺治疗对该病人属于紧急并且不能推迟一个月后，才能为病人进行针刺治疗。

问 3：我可以在药材店为病人进行中医针刺吗？

答 3：中医针刺只能在专用治疗室内进行。没有专用治疗室的药材店只能提供中医诊断和中药治疗服务。

问 4：我可以同时为不同的病人在不同的治疗室进行中医针刺吗？

答 4：中医师为病人进行针刺治疗的整个过程中只限于一名病人，即使在不同的诊室也不能在同一时间为多名病人进行针刺治疗。

问 5：若针刺是我对癌症患者或慢性疾病患者的辅助疗法的一部分，我能为这些患者实施针刺治疗吗？

答 5：作为疼痛管理的一部分，中医针刺（不包括拔罐, 灸法, 刮痧和推拿治疗）是被允许的。

问 6：我可以登门看诊提供必要的中医服务吗？

答 6：为符合政府呼吁民众减少探访和外出，登门看诊将不被允许。

问 7：什么样的慢性疾病属于被允许的范畴？

答 7：您可以继续为那些定期复诊（已接受 3 月或一个疗程以上治疗）的病人诊治。但是为了尽量减少与病人接触，只要病人的情况稳定，不需即时诊治，您应该推迟治疗，或按照“中医执业者道德准则及道德指导原则”中关于远程延续诊疗的条文 4.1.1 (c) 段，转用远程咨询会诊和药物快递的方式对病人进行延续诊疗。

中医师提供必要中医服务的申报及声明

问 8: 如果我之前已获得卫生部和贸工部的批准提供必要的中医服务，我是否必须再次申报？

答 8: 如果您之前已经提交申报，您无需再次申报。

问 9: 如果我想在 COVID-19 阻断措施延长期间为病人提供针刺治疗，我需要重新或额外申报吗？

答 9: 如果您之前已经提交申报，您无需再次或额外申报提供针刺治疗。

问 10: 如果病人要求我提供非必要的中医服务，我该怎么办？

答 10: 您应该向病人解释此措施的目的，并推迟他们的治疗。

问 11: 为什么我只能在一个场所提供必要的中医服务？

答 11: 为尽量减少 COVID-19 的感染风险和跨机构传播，在这期间提供必要中医服务的中医师将只能在一个执业地点行医。

问 12: 我可以在未申报的情况下继续照常行医吗？

答 12: 违反此规定的中医师将可能在传染病法令（IDA）和中医注册法令（TCMP Act）下被起诉。

药材店

问 13: 在这期间，药材店可以继续营业吗？

答 13: 有注册中医师驻诊的药材店仍然可以继续营业提供必要的中医服务（只限于中医诊断、中药和针刺）。针刺治疗只能在设有专用治疗室的药材店，由驻诊的中医师提供。

问 14: 药材店可以出售零售产品吗？

答 14: 有注册中医师驻诊的药材店在提供必要的中医服务的同时，也能继续出售零售产品；但药材店应该限制零售人员的数量，并实施严谨的安全距离措施。