

## Acupuncture: Prevention Workarounds

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**W**HEN WE THINK OF PREVENTION, we know from ancient writings that the best physicians were those who prevented disease from manifesting. It is very unlikely that we are able to abort disease and organ deterioration with increasing longevity. Perhaps the best that is achieved is somewhat of a “postponement” in the later years of life. The closest possibilities of finding the “fountain of youth” may be through the use of genetics. Genetics may help predict diseases well before they manifest, and genetic engineering may help to circumvent and act as a prevention vehicle. What might seem like science fiction now could be the practice of the future.

Does acupuncture offer any short-term solutions for prevention? We know that acupuncture can balance energy, prevent episodic migraines, and help prevent nausea and vomiting caused by cancer chemotherapy. Acupuncture is helpful for smoking cessation to prevent the cardiovascular and cancer impacts. Weight loss, preoperative anxiety, and post-traumatic stress can also be ameliorated by acupuncture. If acupuncture had an alternative name, it could be called “prevention.” Biologic systems are very vulnerable to the outside environment and to iatrogenic influences. Perhaps we should think of simple acupuncture-based prevention as workarounds until we are able to manipulate the mechanisms of healing at the cellular level via technology that is not yet available.

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