

## FACT SHEET

### **Gua Sha**

Gua Sha (pronounced Gwah Shah) is a cleansing technique used by many practitioners of traditional medicines. It involves the methodical application of pressure and stimulation of the skin using a round-edged instrument, often a Chinese porcelain spoon, which results in the appearance of small red or purple spots (petechiae) called 'sha'. The effect is similar to that of a scrape but the skin is not damaged in any way and the redness fades in a few days.

The technique is used to move *qi* and/or blood stagnation, which is considered to be the main cause of pain and stiffness in muscles and joints. It can promote good circulation and release tension as well as remove toxins systemically. According to the principles of traditional Chinese medicine it is used to 'release fire' from the channels (meridians) where the blood is encouraged to flow more freely in the vessels, thus effecting a cleansing action in the body. Gua sha is also useful for the prevention and treatment of acute illness, upper respiratory and digestive problems, and many other disorders.

Gua sha therapy should be carried out by a properly trained practitioner, as there are contraindications for its use.

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