Cupping therapy is a form of alternative medicine in which cups are placed on the skin to create suction. Supporters of cupping therapy believe the suction of the cups mobilizes blood flow to promote the healing of a broad range of medical ailments.

Benefits of Cupping Therapy

The British Cupping Society says cupping therapy can treat a variety of conditions. This has not been backed up by studies. But the organization says cupping therapy is used to treat:

- Blood disorders such as anemia and hemophilia.
- Rheumatic diseases such as arthritis and fibromyalgia.
- Fertility and gynecological disorders.
- Skin problems such as eczema and acne.
- High blood pressure (hypertension).
- Migraine.
- Anxiety and depression.
- Bronchial congestion caused by allergies and asthma.
- Varicose veins.

Supporters also believe that cupping therapy can reduce pain and inflammation throughout the body. And they say it can promote mental and physical relaxation and well-being.
applying pressure to muscles, it uses gentle pressure to pull them upward. For most patients, this is a particularly relaxing and relieving sensation. Once suctioned, the cups are generally left in place for about ten minutes while the patient relaxes. This is similar to the practice of Tui Na, a traditional Chinese medicine massage technique that targets acupuncture points as well as painful body parts, and is well known to provide relief through pressure.

Generally, cupping is combined with acupuncture in one treatment, but it can also be used alone. The suction and negative pressure provided by cupping can loosen muscles, encourage blood flow, and sedate the nervous system (which makes it an excellent treatment for high blood pressure). Cupping is used to relieve back and neck pains, stiff muscles, anxiety, fatigue, migraines, rheumatism, and even cellulite. For weight loss and cellulite treatments, oil is first applied to the skin, and then the cups are moved up and down the surrounding area.

Like acupuncture, cupping follows the lines of the meridians. There are five meridian lines on the back, and these are where the cups are usually placed. Using these points, cupping can help to align and relax qi, as well as target more specific maladies. By targeting the meridian channels, cupping strives to ‘open’ these channels - the paths through which life energy flows freely throughout the body,

**Side Effects of Cupping Therapy**

Cupping is considered to be relatively safe, especially when performed by trained health professionals. Potential side effects include:

- Mild discomfort
- Burns
- Bruises
- Skin infection

According to the British Cupping Society, cupping therapy should be avoided by the following groups:

- Pregnant or menstruating women.
- People with metastatic cancer (cancer that has spread from one part of the body to another).
- People with bone fractures or muscle spasms.

The organization also says cupping therapy should not be applied to sites on the body that have:

- A deep vein thrombosis
- An ulcer
- An artery
- A pulse that can be felt

Like many alternative treatments, cupping therapy has not been extensively studied. Researchers say that most cupping therapy studies have been small and poorly designed. More studies are needed to prove or disprove claims of health benefits.

**This treatment is also valuable for the lungs, and can clear congestion from a common cold or help to control a person's asthma. In fact, respiratory conditions are one of the most common maladies that cupping is used to relieve. Three thousand years ago, in the earliest Chinese documentation of cupping, it was recommended for the treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis.**