

# Character Builder 您好嗎？

The basic unit of the Chinese language is the *zi* (字), i.e. a Chinese word. Each *zi* has a written form (called a character, made up of strokes), a sound (made up of consonant and vowel) and a meaning (or multiple meanings). When we speak or write Chinese, we string *zi* together to form terms, phrases and sentences.

In Putonghua (the spoken form of Modern Standard Chinese) each *zi* is pronounced in one of four tones:

1<sup>st</sup> tone: 1 = diacritical mark — pitch: 5 to 5, highest prolonged

2<sup>nd</sup> tone: 2 = diacritical mark / pitch: 3 to 5, middle to high

3<sup>rd</sup> tone: 3 = diacritical mark U pitch: 2 to 1 to 4, low to lowest to high

4<sup>th</sup> tone: 4 = diacritical mark \ pitch: 5 to 1, highest to lowest)

To pronounce each *zi* below, follow its pinyin and the given tone number. Light-sound words, which have no definite pitch, carry no diacritical mark and are marked by 0.

This week: Words about wound treatment

Putonghua pronunciation: **zhi4**

Cantonese pronunciation: **ji6**

Meanings: heal

治 = tackle/control/eliminate/manage: 治水 (**zhi4 shui3** = control-water = implement flood-control measures), 治家 (**zhi4 jia1** = manage~family-budget/affairs), 治國 (**zhi4 guo2** = control/rule~ country). 醫治 (**yi1 zhi4** = medicine~cure) = apply medical treatment.

Doctors 治病 (**zhi4 bing4** = treat/cure~illnesses). 藥物 (**yao4 wu4** = medicine~things = drugs) 治癒 (**zhi4 yu4** = heal~cure = completely cure) chronic illnesses. Surgery 根治 (**gen1 zhi4** = root~cure = thoroughly cure) ulcers.

治療 (**zhi4 liao2** = cure~heal) = therapy: 物理治療 (**wu4 li3 zhi4 liao2** = physics~therapy = physiotherapy), 放射線療法 (**fang4 she4 xian4 liao2 fa3** = release~shoot~rays~heal~method = radiation therapy), 化學療法 (**hua4 xue2 liao2 fa3** = chemistry~study~heal~method = chemotherapy). Terminal patient 不治 (**bu4 zhi4** = not~cured = dies).

by Diana Yue