



Medical Acupuncture

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ACUPUNCTURE: WHAT IS IT?

Acupuncture is a method of encouraging the body to promote natural healing and to improve functioning. This procedure is done by inserting needles and applying heat or electrical stimulation at very precise acupuncture points.

HOW DOES ACUPUNCTURE WORK?

The classical Chinese explanation is that channels of energy run in regular patterns through the body and over its surface. These energy channels, called meridians, are like rivers flowing through the body to irrigate and nourish the tissues. An obstruction in the movement of these energy rivers is like a dam that backs up in others. These obstructions can hinder the healing process, disrupt the natural balances that exist in the body, and promote pain. The meridians can be influenced by needling the acupuncture points; the acupuncture needles unblock the obstructions at the dams, and reestablish the regular flow through the meridians.

The modern scientific explanation is that needling the acupuncture points stimulates the nervous system to release chemicals in the muscles, spinal cord, and brain. These chemicals will either change the experience of pain, or they will trigger the release of other chemicals and hormones which influence the body's own internal regulating system.

The improved energy and biochemical balance produced by acupuncture results in stimulating the body's natural healing abilities, and in promoting physical and emotional well-being.

HOW MANY TREATMENTS WILL I NEED?

The number of treatments needed differs from person to person. For complex or long-standing conditions, one or two treatments a week for several months may be recommended. For acute problems, usually fewer visits are required. For most conditions, **one visit a week for six weeks is a good guideline** to determine if acupuncture is an effective treatment for you.

ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS TO THE TREATMENT?

Usually not. As energy is redirected in the body, internal chemicals and hormones are stimulated and healing begins to take place. Occasionally the original symptoms worsen for a few days, or other general changes in appetite, sleep, bowel or urination patterns, or emotional state may be triggered. These should not cause concern, as they are simply indications that the acupuncture is starting to work. It is quite common with the first one or two treatments to have a sensation of

deep relaxation or even mild disorientation immediately following the treatment. These pass within a short time, and never require anything more than a bit of rest to overcome. If you drive yourself, you may need to wait for up to an hour in the office after the procedure if you feel excessively drowsy. On rare occasions, people may experience transient light-headedness during the procedure or immediately upon standing.

WHAT ARE THE NEEDLES LIKE? DO THEY HURT?

People experience acupuncture needling differently. Acupuncture needles are very thin. The point is smooth (not hollow with cutting edges like a hypodermic needle) and insertion through the skin is not as painful as injections or blood sampling. Most patients feel only minimal pain as the needles are inserted; some feel no pain at all. Once the needles are in place, there is no pain felt. The risk of bruising and skin irritation is less than when using a hollow needle.

Because your doctor uses disposable needles, there is no risk of infection from the treatments.

ARE THERE ANY "DO'S AND DONT'S" FOR ME ON THE DAY OF A TREATMENT?

Yes. To enhance the value of a treatment, the following guidelines are important:

- Do not eat an unusually large meal immediately before or after your treatment.
- Do not over-exercise, engage in sexual activity, or consume alcoholic beverages within 6 hours before or after the treatment.
- Plan your activities so that after the treatment you can get some rest, or at least not have to be working at top performance. This is especially important for the first few visits.
- Continue to take any prescription medicines as directed by your regular doctor. Substance abuse (drugs and alcohol) especially in the week prior to treatment, will seriously interfere with the effectiveness of acupuncture treatments.
- Remember to keep good mental or written notes of what your response is to the treatment. This is important for your doctor to know so that the follow-up treatments can be designed to best help you and your problem.

IS ACUPUNCTURE COVERED BY HEALTH INSURANCE?

Unfortunately, most insurance companies do not cover medical acupuncture services. Because of this, our services are offered on a cash-only basis. For an evaluation and appointments, please call 610 789 7767.