

What Is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is one of many treatment modalities used in Chinese medicine. The treatment involves the insertion of very thin needles into various acupoints on the body. There are hundreds of these points on the body and each acupoint has a unique effect. The points used during a treatment are selected by the acupuncturist based on the patient's symptoms and overall health constitution. The goal of acupuncture treatment is to relieve symptoms, prevent their recurrence and to help improve the patient's overall health condition.

What Conditions Can Be Treated By Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is best known for pain control but can be used to treat a wide variety of health conditions. It is an effective stand alone treatment for some conditions or can be used in conjunction with conventional medical treatment. The NIH in their Consensus Statement on Acupuncture acknowledged the use of acupuncture in the treatment of:

- low back pain
- osteoarthritis
- headache
- tennis elbow
- fibromyalgia
- myofascial pain
- carpal tunnel syndrome
- postoperative pain
- dysmenorrhea
- nausea & vomiting
- asthma

Is Acupuncture Safe?

Acupuncture is generally regarded as a very safe treatment method with a low incidence of adverse reactions. The use of sterile disposable needles minimizes the possibility of infection. Localized bruising with mild soreness may occasionally occur. Acupuncture should always be performed by a trained and licensed professional. This training includes detailed understanding of anatomy, proper acupuncture technique, safety requirements and precautions to ensure patient safety.

What Is A Standard Course Of Treatment?

The number of treatments required will vary depending on:

- severity & duration of the condition
- overall health of the patient
- individual response to treatment

A standard course of treatment is 6-12 treatments at a frequency of 1-2 times per week. Chronic or difficult conditions may require treatment 1-3 times per week for up to several months. Patients often experience improvement in their symptoms after their 1st treatment with more significant progress after the 3rd or 4th treatment. Each individual is unique and will respond to acupuncture differently.

How Does Acupuncture Work?

According to Chinese medicine acupuncture works on the energetic pathways in the body. These meridians and channels traverse all parts of the body and influence physiological function. Stimulation of acupoints on the channels thereby influences the function and structure of the body.

Western science has yet to fully explain the mechanisms of acupuncture. It is proposed that acupuncture affects the nervous, vascular, immune and endocrine systems resulting in:

- pain control
- muscle relaxation
- reduced swelling & inflammation
- normalized blood flow
- normalized immune response

Does Acupuncture Hurt?

Acupuncture is practically painless. The insertion of the acupuncture needle is generally pain free; sometimes there may be a “pinch” sensation. During the acupuncture treatment a variety of sensations may be felt at the needle location. These sensations may include tingling, warmth, fullness, numbness or a feeling of movement. These various sensations are normal and are a sign of the bodies’ natural energy or Qi being activated.

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