

Acupuncture

Information and advice for patients

Pain Management

Please read the following information carefully and ask your practitioner if there is anything that you do not understand. Once you are happy that you understand exactly what will happen you will be asked to sign a consent form before treatment can start. Remember you can change your mind at any time, even if treatment has started.

What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture is a form of therapy in which a variable number of fine needles are inserted into specific points on the body. These can be either over the painful area or in areas away from your pain and are left in for a variable length of time depending on the effect required. Sometimes electro acupuncture is used where a small, non-harmful electrical current is passed through the needles or magnets which are placed over acupuncture points.

How does acupuncture work?

Acupuncture provides pain relief by stimulating the brain to produce natural pain-relieving chemicals called endorphins. In terms of traditional Chinese medicine, energy called Qi flows around the body in channels. Problems occur if this flow of energy is altered. Acupuncture works by stimulating the movement of Qi and restoring normal flow. It can take 3-4 treatments before benefit occurs.

What are the benefits of acupuncture?

Acupuncture is not a cure and affects everyone differently. Some of the benefits are:

- Decrease in pain.
- Improvement in sleep.
- Feeling less stressed and more relaxed.
- Feeling of well-being.

Is acupuncture safe?

Acupuncture is generally very safe. Serious side effects are rare- less than one per 10,000 treatments.

You need to be aware of:

- **Drowsiness** - A small number of patients feel drowsy after treatment. If you do we would advise you not to drive.
- **Bleeding and bruising** - This can occur after acupuncture in about 3% of treatments.

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- **Pain** - This occurs during treatment in about 1% of treatments. Existing symptoms can get worse after treatment in less than 3% of patients. You should tell your practitioner about this but it is usually a good sign.
- **Dizziness and faintness** - This is rare but can happen particularly on the first treatment.
- **Allergies and infections** - These are very rare as only sterile, single-use disposable needles are used in accordance with national guidelines.

If there are any particular risks that apply to you these will be discussed with you prior to treatment starting.

Acupuncture will not be given if:

- You have a metal allergy.
- You have a needle phobia.
- There is infection where the needle is to be inserted.
- You have haemophilia.

You must inform the practitioner if you:

- Have a bleeding disorder, bruise very easily or are taking any anti-coagulants or blood-thinning medication such as Warfarin, Heparin or Clopidogrel.
- Have ever had a fainting fit or "funny turn".
- Have a pacemaker or other electrical implant.
- Have damaged heart valves or have any other particular risk of infection.
- Have diabetes.
- Are pregnant or trying to conceive.
- Have hepatitis, HIV or any other blood disorder.
- Have epilepsy.

Other Information

All practitioners, both physiotherapists and nurses, have undergone recognised post-graduate training on the use of acupuncture for the management of pain.

What happens now?

Once you are happy that you understand exactly what acupuncture is you will be asked to sign a consent form and treatment will begin. On average six sessions are given either once or twice weekly. If at any time you change your mind please inform your practitioner and either alternative treatment will be provided or a review appointment will be arranged for you, whichever is most appropriate.

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How to contact us

If you have any queries or concerns please contact us.

Physiotherapy

0121 507 4569

Pain Management Clinic

0121 507 4344/5605

Monday-Friday 9am-4pm

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