

ACUPUNCTURE INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture is a therapy used to reduce pain and improve function. It is safe and effective, and often used as alternative to medication.

Very fine needles are inserted through the skin and tissues at specific points on the body. Nothing is injected into the tissues.

“Anatomical” acupuncture is the modern approach used today by most western trained therapists including the Acupuncture Foundation of Canada Institute.

How does it work?

Acupuncture stimulates the body to produce its own pain relieving chemicals called “endorphins”. Endorphins block pain messages to the brain. Acupuncture also reduces inflammation and helps to promote physical and emotional well being.

What do physiotherapists use acupuncture for?

Acupuncture is used for muscular and neurological disorders: back and neck pain, tendonitis, arthritis, loss of joint movement, sciatica

What will I feel?

You may feel minimal discomfort when the needle is inserted, this should settle down within a minute. Acupuncture needles are very fine. They are 3 times finer than the needles used for injecting medications. Some patients report tingling or a sensation of warmth

How long will I need acupuncture?

The number of treatments will vary with individuals and the condition being treated. Some people may only need one or two treatments, longstanding conditions will require more. Relief may be immediate or occur within a few hours. The majority of patients report good relief with acupuncture; occasionally symptoms will become worse before they improve. A

small percentage of patients do not respond to acupuncture.

We offer acupuncture as part of an ongoing physiotherapy treatment plan.

PRECAUTIONS AND POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- **Bruising** –keeping still during treatment will help to prevent this
- **Fainting**
- **Seizure**
- **Nausea**
- **Muscle spasm**
- **Broken needle** – very rare
- **Infection** – acupuncture needles are sterile and discarded after use. Preparation of the skin with an alcohol swap limits the risk of infection.
- **Perforation of organs** – your therapist's knowledge of acupuncture points will eliminate this risk.

Although there are no absolute restrictions to acupuncture please inform your therapist if the following conditions apply to you:

- **Hemophilia**
- **Cardiac pacemaker**
- **Serious heart or lung condition**
- **Epilepsy**
- **Known or possible pregnancy**
- **Taking blood thinning medications**
- **Skin infection, inflammation**

WHAT TO DO BEFORE ACUPUNCTURE

- Have a light meal.
- Take no alcohol, barbiturate or tranquilizer for 4 hours before treatment. Take pain medications as necessary.
- Do not smoke for one hour before a treatment
- Take your usual medications
- Be as well rested as possible

Acupuncture

An Ancient Remedy
for
Modern Times

