

ACUPUNCTURE: WHAT IS IT?

Acupuncture is an ancient method of encouraging the body to promote natural healing and to improve functioning by inserting needles into very precise acupuncture points on the body.

HOW DOES ACUPUNCTURE WORK?

The classical Chinese explanation is that channels of energy run in regular patterns throughout your body and over its surface. These energy channels, called **meridians**, are like rivers flowing through your body to irrigate and nourish the tissues. An obstruction in the movement of these energy (**Qi**) rivers is like a dam that causes physical problems.

Needling the acupuncture points can influence the meridians; the acupuncture needles unblock the obstructions at the dams, and reestablish the regular flow through the meridians. Acupuncture treatments can therefore help the body's internal organs to correct imbalances in their digestion, absorption, and energy production activities, and in the circulation of their energy 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.

WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF MEDICAL ACUPUNCTURE?

Medical acupuncture is a system that can influence three areas of healthcare:

- **Promotion of health and wellbeing**
- **Prevention of illness**
- **Treatment of various medical conditions**

While acupuncture is often associated with pain control, in the hands of a well-trained practitioner it has broader applications. Acupuncture can be effective as the only treatment used, or as the support or adjunct to other medical treatment forms in many medical and surgical disorders. The World Health Organization recognizes the use of acupuncture in the treatment of a wide range of medical problems, including:

- Digestive disorders
- Respiratory disorders
- Neuromuscular disorders
- Urinary, menstrual and reproductive disorders.

Acupuncture is particularly useful in resolving physical problems related to tension, **stress** and **emotional** conditions.

If you have questions about a specific illness or disorder not listed above, please ask us.

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 a few months are usually ideal. As you improve, we extend the length between visits until you are healthy enough to just require "maintenance" or "preventive" visits quarterly. Ideally you should start seeing results in 3-5 treatments.

For those with long-standing conditions or who are on toxic medications, like cholesterol lowering drugs, it may take up to **5-8 treatments** to start showing improvement, because the body is severely out of balance, so patience is necessary.

For **acute** conditions, usually fewer visits are required, and for health maintenance only, four sessions per year, at the change of season, may be all that is necessary.

ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS?

Very few. 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 (healing reaction), 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 working. It is quite common to have a sense of deep relaxation or mild disorientation immediately following the treatment. These pass within a short time. Rarely, bruising occurs at the site of needling.

DOES ACUPUNCTURE REALLY WORK?

Yes. In the past 2000 years, more people have been successfully treated with acupuncture than with all other health modalities combined. Today acupuncture is practiced widely in Asia, the Soviet Union, and in Europe. It is now being used more and more in America by patients and physicians. Acupuncture treatments can be given at the same time as other techniques are being used such as conventional Western medicine, osteopathic or chiropractic adjustments, and homeopathic or naturopathic prescriptions.

DO I HAVE TO BELIEVE IN ACUPUNCTURE IN ORDER FOR IT TO WORK?

No. Acupuncture is used successfully on cats, dogs, and horses. Animals do not understand or believe in the process and yet they are successfully treated. A positive attitude may reinforce the effects of the treatment and a negative attitude may hinder the effects of any treatment including acupuncture. A neutral attitude ("I don't know if I believe in this but I'll try it") will not block the treatment effectiveness.

ARE THERE ANY GUIDELINES FOR THE DAY OF MY ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENT?

- Make sure you are full before the treatment and will not be hungry

- Avoid strenuous exercise, engaging in sexual activity or consuming alcoholic beverages within 6 hours of the treatment.
- Plan your day so you can relax and rest after your treatment
- Continue any prescription medications unless you are told otherwise by your physician.

IS ACUPUNCTURE COVERED BY INSURANCE?

Acupuncture is sometimes a covered benefit, so you should check with your insurance company before you make an appointment. The CPT codes you can ask about coverage are: 97810. The **office visit fee** is often a covered service. You can ask your insurance carrier whether they cover "out of network" physicians for codes: 99204, 99205, 99213, 99214 and 99215.

HOW MUCH DOES ACUPUNCTURE COST?

Please visit our website for the latest FEE schedule: www.imacupuncture.com/fees.

This office does not participate in insurance billing. You will be responsible for submitting a claim to your insurance company after each visit. Payment is accepted via **cash, check or credit card (Visa, MasterCard, American Express).**

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