



Acupuncture

Adult community health services

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What is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is one of a number of different types of treatment that your clinician may offer. It is viewed by clinicians as complementary, rather than alternative therapy.

Acupuncture has been used in China for over 3,000 years. Traditional belief is that energy flows freely throughout the body via channels. However, when there is a problem, the energy stagnates. Stimulation by acupuncture at various points helps to restore the healthy flow of energy in the body. Recent science has shown that it stimulates the brain to produce natural pain relieving substances. These give pain relief and help the body to heal itself.

Current research is supporting the effectiveness of acupuncture, particularly in the management of pain.

When should it not be used?

There are certain circumstances where acupuncture should not be used:

- If you have a needle phobia
- If you have a known metal allergy, specifically stainless steel.
- If you have a known infection in the area to be needled.

When should it be used with caution?

You should inform your clinician if you:

- Have haemophilia
- You are pregnant or trying to conceive
- Suffer from epilepsy
- Have a deficient / weakened immune system
- Have a heart pacemaker
- Are taking anti-coagulation medication
- Are diabetic

These conditions do not exclude you from having acupuncture, but they will influence its application.

Does Acupuncture work?

Yes, but it does not work for all. Success can depend on a number of factors, which include:

- General health
- The severity and duration of the condition.
- How the condition has been managed in the past.

No two people are the same and it's one of the strengths of acupuncture that we treat people individually to get better results.

What does acupuncture involve?

Treatment will consist of the insertion of fine needles. These are high quality, sterilised and disposable, ensuring strict hygiene practice. The needle insertion will feel like a mild pinprick and should only give temporary discomfort. No medication is introduced into your body.

Once needles are in place you may feel a mild ache, numbness, warm or heavy sensation at and around the needle. This should not be unpleasant. This is referred to as "De Qi" and is a sign that the body's inbuilt pain relieving mechanisms are being stimulated. Your clinician may gently stimulate the needle until you experience the De Qi. This may be repeated again throughout your treatment.

Most commonly a treatment will involve the insertion of between 2-16 needles. Needles can be in place for as little as a few seconds or one or two minutes

Usually a course of between three and six treatments is required. It is advisable to eat before having acupuncture and not to attend if you are suffering a severe cold or flu.

Dry Needling

We may also offer you dry needling, which is a technique of inserting acupuncture needles into trigger points (tight sensitive areas in the muscles, to relieve pain and restore movement. Dry needling involves the same sterile techniques as used in acupuncture.

Is acupuncture safe?

All our clinicians are fully trained in the management of a wide range of conditions. Clinicians using acupuncture are required to train to a minimum standard and are bound by professional codes of conduct.

Acupuncture is safer than many of the drug treatments used. However, any procedure that involves inserting needles into the body has some potential problems, but these remain minimal. Acupuncture has been known to produce some 'side effects' in certain people.

Minor Side effects

- Some needle discomfort.
- Drowsiness and sleepiness following treatment.
- Bruising at the needle site.
- Temporary pain increase.
- Fainting/ feeling faint.

**Serious side effects
(these are very rare)**

- Damage to an internal organ from the insertion of a needle.
- Infection in the area where the needle was inserted (If you suspect this after a treatment, please consult your GP).
- Infection which may infect previously damaged heart valves,
- Premature onset of labour, in pregnancy.
- Needles breaking.

Contact us

You can contact us by phone on:

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