

Medical Acupuncture

What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture is an ancient Chinese medical practice that has been used for over 2500 years to effectively treat illness. Acupuncture is a safe, effective, chemical- and drug-free way to stimulate the body's remarkable self-healing abilities. Through the insertion of very tiny solid needles into specific points on the body, the balance and flow of Qi, the life force of energy circulating in meridians, is restored.

WHO definition of health

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

The bibliographic citation for this definition is: Preamble to the Constitution of WHO as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 22 July 1946 and entered into force on 7 April 1948. The definition has not been amended since 1948.

“For this is the great error of our day, that physicians separate the soul from the body.” PLATO

What do we know about acupuncture?

It is extremely safe when performed by medical trained providers. The NIH (National Institute of Health) and WHO (World Health Organization) recognize acupuncture to be an effective treatment for a variety of illnesses.

Since the 1970s when it was first introduced in the US, the technique has gained popularity in the world.

By 2000, 83% cancer patients reported using Complementary Alternative Medicine to treat cancer pain, chemotherapy and radiation side effects, to improve quality of life, and to stimulate the immune system. There continues to be growing scientific evidence demonstrating its effectiveness as an adjunct therapy for cancer care.

Is acupuncture painful?

While many patients with a fear of needles are concerned about pain with acupuncture treatment, most experience only minimal sensation, while some feel no pain at all, with needle insertion. De qi, the sensation experienced during an acupuncture treatment, is described by patients as an “achiness, fullness, or pressure” at the acupuncture site.



How does it work?

Acupuncture stimulates the **neuroendocrine system**, involving the Central (Sympathetic and Parasympathetic) Nervous System and the Peripheral Neuromuscular System. Its effects are broad and multisystem, providing a wide array of beneficial effects.

Acupuncture stimulates the production of the body's own pain relieving biochemicals which include **endorphins** and **enkephalins**, making it extremely useful for pain conditions, including chronic pain, cancer related pain, chemo induced neuropathy and aromatase induced joint pain.

Acupuncture stimulates the release of **serotonin** in the brain and body which are beneficial for treating anxiety, depression and insomnia.

Acupuncture stimulates the production of **immunomodulators**, which decrease inflammation, increase production of red and white bloods for improved hematologic function and improves blood circulation with useful effects for tissue healing and lymphedema management.

Acupuncture stimulates the **endocrine system**, with benefits of hormonal balance and decreased symptoms of hot flashes.

What can I expect during treatment?

Receiving an acupuncture treatment can be a unique and powerful healing experience. Expect to spend 1 – 2 hours with your acupuncturist during the evaluation and treatment sessions. The initial session is a comprehensive interview, review of medical and prior testing and a physical assessment. Wear comfortable clothing for your treatment. Plan to be treated for 6- 12 sessions. Your acupuncturist may use electroacupuncture, the application of an electrical current, or moxibustion, the burning of an herb near the needles or directly on the skin to enhance the movement of qi. It is common to have a sense of deep relaxation during the treatment, with deep restorative sleep and renewed energy after the treatment.

The goal of acupuncture treatment is to not simply address symptom management through complementary treatment with your oncologist and broader healthcare team. Rather, the primary goal of acupuncture is in addressing all aspects of balance in body mind and spirit, through the restoration of the flow of qi. As you experience improvements in your condition, you may also enjoy a greater sense of ease or well-being, a holistic sense of your own ability to be restored and healed.