

# A guide to acupuncture treatment

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Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona  
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## How does acupuncture work?

Acupuncture is an ancient system of Traditional Chinese Medicine based on the invisible channels – known as Meridians – that circulate vital energy and are joined by a series of acupuncture points.

Acupuncture is believed to work by stimulating the brain to produce natural pain relieving chemicals called endorphins.

It is used by the therapist for various conditions including acute or chronic injuries, arthritis, back and neck pain, upper limb pain and muscle and joint problems.

### How is it done?

- Very fine, single-use, sterile disposable needles are inserted into selected points of the body
- During the treatment these may be stimulated manually, electrically or by heat
- This is done with the patient in a comfortable, supported position
- The treatment may take up to thirty minutes, during which you will be monitored regularly
- You will be advised to take a short rest and not to drive immediately if feeling fatigued
- It is preferable that you do not have treatment whilst feeling hungry

## Contact Information

Burns Therapy Team:

0151 430 1057 / 0151 426 1600 Ext 2243

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS):

0151 430 1376

Hand Therapy Team:

0151 430 1237

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**You may feel a slight pin prick as the needle goes into the skin. You may then feel an ache, tingling, warmth or mild discomfort.**

### **Will it work for me?**

Research has shown that most people gain some level of pain relief with acupuncture. This can be immediate or may need two or three treatments to be achieved.

However, if you have not noticed a response after 2-3 treatments then your therapist will discontinue the treatment.

A maximum of 6 acupuncture sessions will be offered as a trial. Repeat courses of treatment will not be offered.

### **Is acupuncture safe?**

Generally it is very safe. Serious side affects are very rare: less than 1 per 10,000 treatments.

Acupuncture is safe when undertaken by a therapist who has completed an approved course. They are trained to use the strictest hygiene and only pre-sterilised disposable needles are used.

## Is there anything your therapist needs to know?

Apart from your usual medical details, including present medications, we need to know:

- If you have ever experienced a fit, faint or 'funny turn'
- If you have a pacemaker or any other electrical implants
- If you are pregnant (acupuncture will only be offered at your therapist's discretion)
- If you have a bleeding disorder or take anticoagulants
- If you have damaged heart valves or have any other particular risk of infection
- If you have unstable angina, irregular heart beats or any other heart problems
- If you have diabetes
- If you have low blood pressure
- Very rarely trauma can occur to internal organs when certain points are used. Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists are trained to avoid high risk points
- If you are allergic to metal
- If you have any moles/growths or skin infections
- If you are feeling unwell, e.g. cold/flu

If you have a phobia of needles, please tell your therapist who may be able to offer you a non-invasive option.

Your therapist will discuss these and any other possible issues with you and you will be asked to sign a consent form.

## Does acupuncture have side effects?

- You need to be aware that drowsiness occurs after treatment in a small number of patients and if affected you are advised not to drive or operate machinery
- Minor bleeding or bruising occurs after acupuncture in about 3% of treatments
- Pain during treatment occurs in about 1% of treatments
- Existing symptoms can get worse after treatment (less than 3%). You should tell your therapist about this, but it is usually a good sign
- Fainting or nausea can occur in certain patients particularly after the first treatment
- In addition, if there are any particular risks that apply in your case, your therapist will discuss these with you

Thank you for reading this. We want you to feel comfortable about your treatment. Should you have any concerns before or during your treatment, please discuss these with your therapist.