

Acupuncture Patient Information Leaflet

Please read this information carefully, and ask your physiotherapist if there is anything that you do not understand.

What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture is a form of therapy in which needles are inserted into specific points on the body. It's use dates back thousands of years; "classical" acupuncture was developed in China, but now is used increasingly in modern medicine worldwide.

How does acupuncture work?

Acupuncture stimulates the body to produce its own pain relieving chemicals or "endorphins". These help block pathways that relay pain messages from the body to the brain, resulting in relief of pain, general relaxation and biochemical restoration of the body's own internal regulation systems. The resultant improved biochemical balance stimulates the body's natural healing abilities, reduces inflammation, and promotes physical and emotional well-being.

Is acupuncture safe?

Acupuncture is generally very safe with very few side effects.

Does acupuncture have side effects?

There are very few adverse effects or complications that arise from the use of acupuncture. Most patients find that the treatments are relaxing and cause minimal discomfort. You may however experience;

- *Drowsiness occurs after treatment in a small number of patients, and if affected you are advised not to drive;*
- *Minor bleeding or bruising occurs after acupuncture in about 3% of treatments;*
- *Existing symptoms can get worse after treatment (less than 3% of patients). You should tell your physiotherapist about this, but it is usually a good sign;*
- *Fainting can occur in certain patients, particularly at the first treatment.*

Is there anything your physiotherapist needs to know?

Apart from the usual medical details, it is important that you let your physiotherapist know:

- You are, or there is any possibility that you could be pregnant
- If you have ever experienced dizziness, faintness or seizures;
- If you have a pacemaker or any other electrical implants;
- If you are taking anti-coagulants or any other medication;
- You are a haemophiliac
- If you have damaged heart valves or have any other particular risk of infection.

Single-use, sterile, disposable needles are used, so there is no possibility of transmission of blood-borne viruses.

(Please turn page)

Does it hurt?

Most patients only feel minimal discomfort as the needles are inserted; some feel no pain at all; once the needles are in place, there should be no significant discomfort; a dull ache may be felt around the site. Acupuncture needles are extremely thin – 2 or 3 acupuncture needles would fit inside the barrel of a regular hollow needle used for injections.

What to do before an acupuncture treatment?

- Have a light meal or snack within 2 hours before treatment.
- Take no alcohol, barbiturate or tranquilizer for 4 hours before treatment
- Do not smoke tobacco for 1 hour before treatment
- Continue to take all medications as prescribed by your doctor
- Be well-rested, if possible

What to do after an acupuncture treatment?

- Rest for 2 hours, if possible
- If the treatment is for a painful condition, avoid strenuous activity for 2 days after treatment, even if you are pain free
- Continue to take medications as prescribed by your doctor
- Do not take any alcohol or caffeine for 2 hours after treatment
- Do not smoke tobacco for 1 hour after treatment

What to expect from treatment?

The number of treatments will vary with each person and the condition being treated. Relief may be noticed immediately, some notice improvement within a few hours, or after a few days; some may not respond to acupuncture. Occasionally symptoms become worse before they improve. For conditions of recent onset, few treatments are usually required; longstanding conditions may require 1-2 treatments a week for several sessions before improvement is noticed.

CONSENT TO TREATMENT FOR ACUPUNCTURE

I, request and consent to the performance of Acupuncture. I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and that I may stop treatment or any procedure at any time.

I understand that my signature on the form indicates that I have read and understand the patient information leaflet regarding my treatment and of the risks and possible side effects. I understand that if I have any questions about this information, I should ask my physiotherapist.

Patient's Name: (please print) _____

Patient's Signature _____ Date: _____

Witness Name: (please print) _____

Witness Signature: _____ Date: _____