

Full Life Acupuncture



How does acupuncture work?

The classical Chinese explanation is that channels of energy run in regular patterns through the body and over its surface. These energy channels, called meridians, are like rivers flowing through the body to irrigate and nourish the tissues. An obstruction in the movement of these energy rivers is like a dam that backs up in others.

The meridians can be influenced by needling the acupuncture points; 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.

How many treatments will I need?

The number of treatments needed differs from person to person. For complex or longstanding conditions, one or two treatments a week for several months may be recommended. For acute problems, usually fewer visits are required, and for health.

Are there any side effects to the treatment?

Usually not. 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, 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 starting to work. It is quite common with the first one or two treatments to have a sensation of deep relaxation or even mild disorientation immediately following the treatment. These pass within a short time, and never require anything more than a bit of rest to overcome.

What are the needles like? Do they hurt?

People experience acupuncture needling differently. Most patients feel only minimal pain as the needles are inserted; some feel no pain at all. Once the needles are in place, there is no pain felt. Acupuncture needles are very thin and solid and are made from stainless steel. The point is smooth (not hollow with cutting edges like a hypodermic needle) and insertion through the skin is not as painful as injections or blood sampling. The risk of bruising and skin irritation is less than when using a hollow needle. Because your doctor carefully sterilizes the needles using the same techniques as for surgical instruments, or uses disposable needles, there is no risk of infection from the treatments. Remember to keep good mental or written notes of what your response is to the treatment. This is important for your doctor to know so that the follow-up treatments can be designed to best help you and your problem.