

Q: What is acupuncture?

A: Acupuncture is one of the major components of the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). It inserts thin metallic needles into anatomically defined locations on the body to affect bodily function. The acupuncture points are called acupoints which correspond to areas on the surface of the body that have been shown to have greater electrical conductance due to the presence of a higher density of gap junctions along cell borders. A greater metabolic rate, temperature, and calcium ion concentration are also observed at these points.

Based on the experience and knowledge learned over the course of several thousand years, acupuncture practitioners have classified those acupoints into meridians by the effectiveness of those acupoints to different organs. There are 361 acupoints within 14 Meridian groups.

Q: How does acupuncture work?

A: Results from modern western medical research demonstrates acupuncture stimulating the nervous system to releases certain chemicals into the brain, spinal cord and muscles. These chemicals either reduce pain (such chemical is called endorphin, which is nearly 1,000 times stronger than morphine), or trigger the releasing of other chemicals such as hormones, which in the end influence the body's own internal regulating system.

Q: Is acupuncture safe?

A: Acupuncture is extremely safe when practiced by a well-trained, licensed acupuncturist. Today, all licensed acupuncturist use disposable sterile needles. The chance of getting infection is minimal.

Q: Does it hurt?

A: Acupuncture needles have different sizes, usually not much thicker than a hair. The disposable needles come with individually packaged tubes, which makes needles clean and inserts into skin very quick before your nerve can sense the pain. That is why the insertion is usually painless. It does not feel like getting an injection. Then your acupuncturist will do little stimulation to make some heaviness, pressure or soreness sensation. In Chinese, such sensation is called "De Qi", which means the needle starting to work. Most people find acupuncture treatment very relaxing, and even fall asleep during treatment.

Q: How many treatments will I need?

A: It varies according to the duration, severity, and type of complaint. you may need only a couple of treatments for acute muscle aches and pain, or acute sinusitis. Many chronic problems may need around 10 treatments. Some degenerative conditions may require even more treatments. Most people start once or twice treatments in one week, and gradually less often. Along with acupuncture treatment, your acupuncturist may suggest certain diet, specific stretch exercise, and/or Chinese herbs to increase the efficacy of acupuncture.

Q: How can I choose an acupuncturist?

A: In State of Indiana, it requires acupuncturist to pass National Commission for the Certification of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) exam and to get Indiana state license to practice. The applicants to take NCCAOM exam should have attended the creditability schools for 4 years' full time study with about 2,600 credit hours of Chinese Medical education, and finish 500 clinical hours to get a Master's degree. Candidates must pass the five portions of exams, which are: Foundation of Oriental Medicine, Acupuncture, Point location, Biomedicine, and Chinese Herbology.

Q: Do I need to do something before receiving an acupuncture treatment?

A: Avoid treatment when extremely hungry, full , fatigue or shortly after sex, which may result in fainting.

Q: Do I need to do something during acupuncture treatment?

A: Just relax and not moving suddenly. Tell your acupuncturist if you are uncomfortable.

Q: Do I expect relieve right away?

A: Many patients start to feel relieve right after the initial treatment, and such good result can last from hours to days. As treatment goes on, most patients feel better longer and longer.