

# WHAT IS ACUPUNCTURE?

Acupuncture is an ancient Chinese form of medicine which has been used in China for the last 3000 years. Its effectiveness is now accepted in various countries including New Zealand, especially as more people in our society dislike taking medical drugs.

Acupuncture aims at treating the person, along with the disease. This means that the acupuncturist looks at the patient as a whole, finds the cause of the illness and the imbalance in the body causing it. With its unique system of diagnosis, an acupuncturist will ask not only details of the immediate problem, but also take a case history of past illnesses, familial tendencies, and aim to determine a complete picture of the patient's health. In this way acupuncture has always been used as a preventative medicine and can bring positive benefits to almost any illness.

## HOW IT WORKS

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) describes pathways of energy flowing through the body, carrying nourishment and information to all tissues and organs. Disease occurs when some factor disrupts the normal flow of life force. The role of the acupuncturist is to restore the normal flow of life forces and re-establish health.

Rigorous scientific research has also confirmed that acupuncture promotes the production of natural healing substances to relieve pain, regulate nerve transmission, enhance the immune system, regulate hormones and blood flow, release natural anti-inflammatories, relax muscle spasm and elevate mood.

## Conditions treated with Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine

The following list is an example of conditions treated based on recommendations of the World Health Organisation, available scientific literature in the field and consistent with what is taught in acupuncture colleges.

### MUSCULOSKELETAL

Low back pain, tennis elbow, knee strain, neck/shoulder pain, sciatica, arthritis, joint swelling/pain, thoracic pain, muscle strain, hip pain, carpal tunnel syndrome, wrist strain, sacroiliac pain, sports injuries.

### RESPIRATORY

Sinusitis, hayfever, common cold, bronchitis, asthma, cough, painful respiration, nosebleed.

### GASTROINTESTINAL

Constipation, irritable bowel syndrome, colitis, diarrhoea, nausea, abdominal pain, gastritis, haemorrhoids.

### CARDIOVASCULAR

Angina, palpitations, high and low blood pressure.

### WOMEN'S HEALTH

Painful periods, premenstrual syndrome, excessive menstrual bleeding, irregular menstruation, fertility disorders, menopausal syndrome

### PREGNANCY

Morning sickness, foetal malposition, insufficient lactation, pregnancy tune-up, assistance with deliveries.

### NEUROLOGICAL

Headaches, migraine, trigeminal neuralgia, shingles, meniere's disease, tinnitus, ear pain, bell's palsy, hemiplegia, post-stroke syndrome.

### METABOLIC DISORDERS

Low energy, insomnia, chronic fatigue syndrome, adrenal insufficiency, hormonal irregularities.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS

Post-traumatic stress, anxiety, smoking/drug addiction, depression, erectile dysfunction.

### MISCELLANEOUS

Sports performance/enhancement, skin disorders, prostate problems, cystitis.

## TREATMENT

Treatment by acupuncture consists of the insertion of fine needles into a few carefully selected points on the body. The number of needles used varies from two or three to ten or more, and they are left in place for an average of twenty minutes. The total number of treatments required depends on the patient and the condition being treated.

A typical treatment may include moxibustion (warming of the acupuncture needles), acupressure, Chinese herbal medicine and dietary advice and/or Chinese remedial exercise.

There is no age limit for treatment. It is important to advise the practitioner if you are pregnant but pregnancy does not preclude acupuncture or its benefits. Babies and children may be treated with acupressure in lieu of the use of needles.

Needle sterilisation practiced by registered acupuncturists complies with standards set by the New Zealand Department of Health.

Please inform your practitioner if you are pregnant, have a history of HIV or Hepatitis or other medical conditions.

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## Will it hurt?

Most new patients are amazed how painless acupuncture can be. However, when the correct stimulus of the needle has been obtained the patient may feel some heaviness, distention, tingling or electric sensation either around the needle or travelling up or down the affected energy pathway or meridian.

## What should one do after a treatment?

Acupuncture changes the state of energy of the body and affects nerve and blood vessels as well as the tone within the muscles. For this reason, it is best to avoid heavy physical labour following a treatment. Avoidance of alcohol is also recommended.

Otherwise no special precautions are necessary. Occasionally patients may notice a brief worsening of the symptoms of the condition prior to an improvement. More commonly there is relief from the first or second treatment and this is consolidated with progressive treatments.

## The New Zealand Register of Acupuncturists

The New Zealand Register of Acupuncturists was incorporated as a society in 1977 to promote Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and acupuncture and to ensure the highest standards of ethics and professionalism amongst its members. New members must have trained at colleges which require a minimum of four (4) years of full time study in TCM, including Western anatomy, physiology and pathology as well as acupuncture. Members of the Register have been trained at recognised places and/or have shown equivalent standards of proficiency through their clinical practice and by examination.

The New Zealand Register of Acupuncturists is comprised of a group of highly skilled practitioners who specialise in the field of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

The Register is a member of the World Federation of Acupuncture and Moxibustion Societies and is affiliated with the Australian Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine Association Ltd.

All practising members are Registered ACC Treatment Providers.

This brochure has been compiled by the **New Zealand Register of Acupuncturists Inc:**

For further information please refer to members in your local area or contact:

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**SAFE  
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**AN INTRODUCTION TO ACUPUNCTURE**