

TRADITIONAL ACUPUNCTURE

Questions & Answers

Q&A

The Wellbeing Centre

Traditional acupuncture is a highly developed system of natural healing with a focus on treating the whole person.

As well as being an effective response to a wide range of specific health problems it is a powerful support for our general health and wellbeing.

These notes answer some common questions about traditional acupuncture.

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Q&A

What can acupuncture do for me?

It can be used to resolve specific symptoms or to support your general health and wellbeing. If you need advice about this please request a telephone discussion with a practitioner.

How many treatments will I need?

This varies between patients. A course of treatment is certainly required, one-off miracle cures are unusual. Some changes in your general wellbeing or in your specific condition should be noticed after 4 – 6 treatments.

Does it hurt?

Acupuncture is not painless but neither can it be described as painful. Most people's experience of needles is of those used in injections and blood tests. Acupuncture needles bear little resemblance to these and are much finer. When the needle is inserted, the sensation is often described as a tingling and patients quite often feel nothing at all. The Five Elements tradition uses very gentle needling techniques and as few needle insertions as possible.

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Is it safe? What about the needles used?

Members use single use pre-sterilised disposable needles, which are disposed of after each treatment. British Acupuncture Council (BAcC) members observe the Code of Safe Practice which lays down stringent standards of hygiene and sterilisation for other equipment. These procedures have been approved by the Department of Health, and provide protection against the transmission of infectious diseases. Patients who have been treated by a BAcC member are eligible to donate blood through the National Blood Service.

Should I tell my doctor?

If you are receiving treatment from your doctor then it makes sense to tell him or her about your plans to have acupuncture. The acupuncture treatment may enable you to reduce or even stop taking some forms of medication, but your doctor should be consulted regarding any change of prescription. You should always tell your acupuncturist about any medication you are taking as this may affect your response to the acupuncture treatment.

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Should I continue with my prescribed medication while undergoing a course of acupuncture treatment?

Yes, at least until careful discussion is had with your doctor or the practitioner who prescribed the medication. Many people seek the help of an acupuncturist because drug treatment does not seem to be working or because the side effects are unacceptable. Do not stop taking any medication without professional guidance.

What should I do before treatment?

Try not to have a big meal within an hour of your appointment as the process of digestion will alter the pattern of your pulse. When cleaning your teeth on the day of treatment please do not brush your tongue as the coating has importance in diagnosis. Also avoid alcohol and food or drinks which colour your tongue (such as coffee) immediately prior to treatment.

How will I feel after acupuncture?

Usually rather relaxed and calm. Occasionally you may feel tired or drowsy for a few hours if the treatment has been particularly strong or there may be a short term flare up of your symptoms as your energy clears and rebalances.

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Is acupuncture available on the NHS?

Not generally. In cases where your local Primary Care Group or Primary Care Trust have agreed a contract with a local acupuncturist, your GP may make a referral. However, you should always enquire as to the training of an acupuncturist and ensure that they have studied for a minimum three years full-time or the part-time equivalent.

Is acupuncture available on private health insurance?

Some private health insurance policies cover acupuncture treatment.

Why should I go to a BAcC member?

British Acupuncture Council members have an extensive training in acupuncture and biomedical sciences appropriate to the practice of acupuncture in the UK. As well as being covered by full Medical Malpractice and Public/Products Liability Insurance, members are bound by Codes of Ethics, Practice and Disciplinary Procedures.

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What should I look for in an acupuncturist?

Aside from assurances that the practitioner is registered with a professional body, and has appropriate insurance cover, your personal relationship/rapport with your practitioner is important. Find a practitioner with whom you feel comfortable, who understands what you want from treatment and who can explain clearly what they expect acupuncture treatment to be able to do for you.

How may I obtain further information?

Please contact The Wellbeing Centre by telephone or email. If our reception staff can't provide an answer we will arrange a telephone discussion with a practitioner.

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Contact

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