

“With superior knowledge the physician cures before the illness is manifested. . . with inferior knowledge the physician can but attempt to care for the illness he was unable to prevent.”

Chinese Proverb

What is acupuncture?

When most people think of acupuncture they think of needles. Acupuncture is more than a technique, it is an ancient system of healthcare used to treat pain, illness and dysfunction within the body. It is the art, philosophy and science (as of October 1997 when the National Institute’s of Health gave it scientific status) of treating health conditions as the Chinese have 5,000 - 7,000 years. Acupuncture is not the exclusive domain of the Chinese though.

One of the most important ancient Egyptian treatises on health, the papyrus Ebers of 1550 B.C. Some Eskimos use sharp stones in the utilization of some simplified acupuncture techniques. The Bantu of South Africa scratched certain areas of the body to cure diseases. Some Arabs cauterize a part of the ear for the treatment of sciatica.

How does acupuncture work?

According to the principles of acupuncture, pain, illness and dysfunction occur when there is an imbalance or blockage of Chi (Qi) at some point along a meridian. There are twelve meridians that are on each side of the body, meridians are named for the organ for which they influence or course through. These imbalances or blockages prevent Chi from flowing through the meridians, which can cause pain or dysfunction along the meridian.

Acupuncture harmonizes or balances this vital energy. Disturbances in Chi occur from improper thought, the way we breathe, the foods we eat, and injury. To obtain long-term and permanent healing these factors must be addressed during the course of treatment. Acupuncture can promote healing in a number of afflictions of the individual.

Acupuncture can remove blockages and restore harmony by inserting hair-thin presterilized disposable needles. However, electrical stimulation using pads or small probes, magnets, lasers, magnets and pressure have all been successfully used in acupuncture treatment. Research has shown that acupuncture may prompt the release of the neurotransmitters: endorphins, norepinephrine or serotonin during the treatment, which may explain some of the effects, obtained.

What types of conditions respond to acupuncture?

When most Americans think of acupuncture they think of it’s role in pain control. Back, neck, shoulder, facial, muscular pain respond well to acupuncture. Acupuncture has been found to effective in cases of nausea associated with pregnancy and chemotherapy. Studies have looked at the role of acupuncture in the treatment of asthma, cardiac disease, menstrual problems, genitourinary problems and neurological dysfunction. The National Institutes of Health has even stated that it has a role in stroke rehabilitation.

How long does acupuncture take?

The frequency and number of treatments is dependent on several variables: length of time the patient has had the pain or condition, complexity of the problem, or age of the patient. Generally, the longer one has had the condition, the greater the complexity or the older the patient the longer treatment may take.

Six to eight treatments might be considered the average for many conditions. Acute conditions often resolve in one or two treatments while the more chronic and complex problems may take some more time.

Specific recommendations for frequency and number of treatments are made based upon your specific need. Treatment is continuously monitored to determine if a reduction in frequency or number of treatments might be appropriate.

Acupuncture is only one tool in the restoration and preservation of health.

How do I find a "qualified" acupuncturist?

Are there any side-effects or complications to acupuncture treatments?