NHS
Calderdale and Huddersfield
NHS Foundation Trust

Physiotherapy Department

Acupuncture

What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture is a form of therapy in which fine needles are inserted into specific points in the body to produce a therapeutic effect. Evidence has shown it to be useful in treating pain from a variety of conditions and this is now a widely accepted treatment within the NHS. Although it does not work for everybody or every condition, good results are often achieved.

How does acupuncture work?

Acupuncture causes the release of hormones and chemicals which send signals to your brain and spinal cord to "block" some of the pain messages that your brain is receiving. This reduction in pain can in turn lead to increased movement and function at the affected joint.
Sometimes acupuncture can be used to directly reduce muscle spasm, or to relieve tenderness in specific areas of tight and/or tender muscles.
Acupuncture is not given as a stand-alone treatment. You will be expected to participate in active therapy prescribed by your physiotherapist to achieve optimum benefit.

What should I expect?

At your first appointment your therapist will explain the treatment and answer any questions that you may have.

What does it feel like?

A brief sharp sensation is usually felt as the needle penetrates the skin. This is then sometimes followed by a mild, heavy dull ache. This sensation is unique to each individual. If at any time you feel unhappy to continue, it can be stopped.

How long will the needles be in for?

The needles will usually be in for between 10 and 30 minutes.

Where will the needles be placed?

Several needles may be inserted in and around the painful area/away from the painful area and sometimes on the opposite side of the body.
This is because there is evidence that needling away from the painful area can be effective.

How many treatments will I have?

You will likely receive between 4-6 sessions over the course of a few weeks. If your pain has not reduced after 3 sessions it is unlikely that you will benefit from continued acupuncture.

compassionate care

Needle stimulation

Once the needles are in place, your physiotherapist may gently stimulate the needles at intervals throughout treatment by gently rotating them. The aim of this is to maintain the dull, heavy sensation, which is the essence of the pain-relieving effects of acupuncture.

Is acupuncture safe?

Acupuncture is generally very safe treatment. Single-use, sterile, disposable needles are used in this department and all physiotherapists who use acupuncture have had additional, specific training which they are required to update regularly.

Are there any possible adverse effects?

The following are the known (based on research evidence) possible adverse effects associated with acupuncture. Your physiotherapist will discuss these with you and explain if you are at any enhanced risk

- Bleeding and bruising (3%)
- Nausea (0.3%)
- Mild aggravation of symptoms (3%, of which 70-85% show subsequent improvement)
- Feeling faint (0.3%)
- Mild pain at the needle site (1%)
- Stuck or bent needle (0.1%)
- Drowsiness (1%)
- Headache (0.1%)
- Dizziness (0.6%)
- Allergy or infection (up to 0.2%)
- Pain not at needle site (0.5%)
- Pneumothorax (0.0002%/less than 2 per 1 million)

If you decide to proceed we will ask for your written consent to the treatment.

When is acupuncture not appropriate?

If you have any of the following conditions, please tell your physiotherapist, he or she will discuss the risk factors with you and decide whether or not acupuncture is suitable for you.

- Unstable heart conditions, heart value disease or pace maker.
- Uncontrolled body movements.
- Poorly controlled diabetes.
- Poorly controlled epilepsy or unexplained seizures.
- Bleeding disorders, anticoagulant therapy (such as Warfarin).
- If the local area to be treated has any of the following; poor circulation, reduced sensation, local infection or swelling.
- Allergy to nickel or stainless steel.
- Unstable blood pressure.
- Severe phobia of needles.
- Recent stroke.
- If you are on active treatment for cancer or if you have had cancer affecting your spine.
- Pregnancy; whether you are, possibly pregnant or trying to conceive (treatment may be given by someone with specialist training).
- If you have hepatitis or any long term infection.
- History of fainting.
- If you have had a previous negative reaction to acupuncture.
- Acupuncture is not recommended for patients who are unable to co-operate with treatment or who are confused.

How should I prepare for my acupuncture treatment?

Read this information leaflet carefully and ask any questions or highlight any concerns you have with your Physiotherapist. Bring appropriate clothing to your treatment, including shorts if your problem is in the leg or back. If you have long hair, make sure you have some way of putting it up. **You may need to remove some items of clothing in the area to be treated.**

Make sure you have something to eat within two hours prior to your appointment time.
There is increased risk of fainting or drowsiness if you have acupuncture on an empty stomach.
If you are diabetic the risks are more serious.

http://www.cht.nhs.uk/services/clinical-services/physiotherapy-outpatients/patient-careinformation/

Scan the QR code below to take you to our website.

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Physiotherapy Department
Huddersfield Royal Infirmary
Telephone 01484 342434
Booking Office 01484 728941

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

ਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ,
ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ یا زبان میں درکار ہوں، تو
برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

"إذا احتجت الحصول على هذه المعلومة بشكل مغاير أو مترجمة إلى لغة مختلفة فيرجى منك الاتصال بالقسم المذكور أعلاه"

CHFT