



Acupuncture

How you should be involved in decisions about your healthcare and treatment.



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Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is for patients considering acupuncture as part of their advised treatment plan.

What is this leaflet about?

This leaflet will provide you with the required information to help you decide whether you want to proceed with acupuncture.

What is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is one of the oldest recorded forms of medicine, having originated in China over 2000 years ago. The technique consists of inserting thin, sterile needles through the skin at specific points on the body to control pain and other symptoms. This is called Traditional Chinese Acupuncture.

It is used in Podiatry as a treatment in itself, or to complement other treatment methods for the relief of acute or chronic pain. Acupuncture needles may also be used in "dry needling" to treat inflamed areas of tissue within muscles called myofascial trigger points. These areas of stress/pain can be acquired in normal and sporting activities and may be released by contact with the needle for a short time. This may involve more than one session to do this.

How does Acupuncture work?

Acupuncture has important effects on the way in which the nervous system, glandular system, and immune system work. Acupuncture stimulates nerve endings, causing the brain to produce natural painkillers (including endorphins and serotonin), reducing inflammation, relieving pain and assisting the body in the healing process.



Is Acupuncture safe?

Acupuncture carries the same risks as any other medical procedure involving needles.

Does it hurt?

People experience Acupuncture needling differently. However, it is no more painful than an ordinary injection or blood test and in many cases, it is much less painful than these. Most patients feel only minimal pain as the needles are inserted, some feel no pain at all. Generally, a small pinprick is immediately felt as the skin is broken. The needling technique which is used feels like a firm, but not uncomfortable pressure as the needle is manipulated.

At the end of the treatment, the needles will be removed, and the patient may be advised to sit and rest for a short period. If you have a needle phobia or have significant anxiety (prior to needling), this should be discussed with the Podiatrist before treatment is arranged.

Are there any possible problems I should be aware of?

Sometimes a small bruise appears or minor bleeding where the needle was inserted (about 3% of patients). This isn't serious, it just means that a little vein was broken by the needle. There is no need to do anything about it, it will go away by itself. Some patients find that their symptoms become temporarily worse for a short time after Acupuncture.

In general, aggravation is followed by an improvement, so is usually a good sign. Some degree of drowsiness after Acupuncture is fairly common. If drowsiness occurs following treatment, patients are advised not to drive.

What can I expect?

Like any other form of treatment, some patients respond positively to Acupuncture, and some do not. An improvement may be experienced after a single treatment, although most patients need 2-3 treatments to determine their individual response. Please allow up to 40 minutes per appointment.

Treatment is normally weekly but the frequency and, number of appointments will vary from person to person and will be discussed with you at your first appointment and is subject to clinical provision / availability. If no improvement has been achieved after 3-4 treatments, you are unlikely to gain any benefit from Acupuncture and will be discharged or referred on as appropriate.





For further information and advice please contact:

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