

Alliance Handshake

October 2017

Periodically our clients ask questions about acupuncture...what is it, how does it work, what does it do, is it safe, are there side effects, and what kinds of conditions can be treated with acupuncture? We will provide information in this newsletter to answer some of those questions.

Acupuncture is one branch of Traditional Chinese Medicine. It dates back thousands of years with its origins in China. According to Veronica Cavella Pedersen, L.Ac.¹, who practices Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine, acupuncture has been in continuous use since that time to diagnose and treat disease in accord with Chinese medical theory. I hope you enjoy reading this information.

-William Van Ry Owner & CEO



Memory Game

...

It is very important to exercise the mind as well as the body. With each edition of our newsletter, we will include a memory word game for you to complete.

Word Game

...

Last issues word: **RESTING**

reign egis siren tiger inset
rein sent site tine inter
rent sign snit ting nest
resign signer stein tinge niter
resin signet stern tire girt
rest sine sting tries gist
ring sing stinger trig grin
rinse singe stir trine grist
rise singer string inert grits
risen sinter tern ingest
rite sire tier insert

The average is 37 words. Did you meet or beat this standard?

Can you find 50 words within this issue's word **STAINED**?

What is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is a technique in which practitioners stimulate specific points on the body—most often by inserting thin needles through the skin. The needles used in acupuncture are very different from the hollow hypodermic needles we are familiar with used for injections and to draw blood. Acupuncture needles are very fine, comparable to a strand of hair in thickness. These needles are sterile, made of surgical stainless steel, individually packaged, used only once and then properly disposed of.

“Needles are inserted in specific points on the body to help bring the energies of the individual into balance. When there are imbalances in this vital energy, disease can occur. There are over 400 specific points mapped out on the body, front and back, along meridians or pathways which influence various internal organ functions. Several of these points are selected for a treatment, depending on what condition the patient would like to address and the acupuncturist’s findings during the examination.”¹

What Does Science Say About the Effectiveness of Acupuncture

According to the National Institutes of Health², results from a number of research studies suggest that acupuncture may help ease types of pain that are often chronic such as low-back pain, neck pain, and osteoarthritis/knee pain. It also may help reduce the frequency of tension headaches

and prevent migraine headaches. Therefore, acupuncture appears to be a reasonable option for people with chronic pain to consider. However, clinical practice guidelines are inconsistent in recommendations about acupuncture.

The effects of acupuncture on the brain and body and how best to measure those effects are only beginning to be understood. Current evidence suggests that many factors—like expectation and belief—that are unrelated to acupuncture needling may play important roles in the beneficial effects of acupuncture on pain.

What Does Science Say About Safety and Side Effects of Acupuncture

Relatively few complications from using acupuncture have been reported. Still, complications have resulted from use of nonsterile needles and improper delivery of treatments.

When not delivered properly, acupuncture can cause serious adverse effects, including infections, punctured organs, collapsed lungs, and injury to the central nervous system.

NIH-reported Research** on the Effects of Acupuncture on Specific Conditions²

Osteoarthritis/Knee Pain

- A 2014 Australian clinical study involving 282 men and women showed that acupuncture is

consistently better than no treatment but not necessarily better than simulated acupuncture at relieving osteoarthritis pain.

- A major 2012 analysis of data on participants in acupuncture studies found that actual acupuncture was more helpful for osteoarthritis pain than simulated acupuncture or no acupuncture.
- A 2010 systematic review of studies of acupuncture for knee or hip osteoarthritis concluded that actual acupuncture was more helpful for osteoarthritis pain than either simulated acupuncture or no acupuncture. However, the difference between actual and simulated acupuncture was very small, while the difference between acupuncture and no acupuncture was large.

Headache

- A 2012 analysis of data on individual participants in acupuncture studies looked at migraine and tension headaches. The analysis showed that actual acupuncture was more effective than either no acupuncture or simulated acupuncture in reducing headache frequency or severity.
- A 2009 systematic review of studies concluded that actual acupuncture, compared with simulated acupuncture or pain-relieving drugs, helped people with tension-type headaches.
- A 2008 systematic review of studies suggested that actual acupuncture has a very slight advantage over simulated acupuncture in reducing tension-type headache intensity and the number of

headache days per month.

- A 2009 systematic review found that adding acupuncture to basic care for migraines helped to reduce migraine frequency. However, in studies that compared actual acupuncture with simulated acupuncture, researchers found that the differences between the two treatments may have been due to chance.

Other Conditions

- Results of a systematic review that combined data from 11 research trials with more than 1,200 participants suggested that acupuncture (and acupuncture point stimulation) may help with certain symptoms associated with cancer treatments.
- There is not enough evidence to determine if acupuncture can help people with depression.
- Acupuncture has been promoted as a smoking cessation treatment since the 1970s, but research has not shown that it helps people quit the habit.

More to Consider about Acupuncture

Don't use acupuncture to postpone seeing your doctor about a health problem. If you decide to visit an acupuncturist, check his or her credentials. Most states require a license, certification, or registration to practice acupuncture; however, education and training standards and requirements for obtaining these vary from state-to-state.

Although a license does not ensure quality of care, it does indicate that the practitioner meets certain standards regarding the knowledge and use of acupuncture. Most states require a diploma from the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) for licensing.

Some physicians and dentists practice acupuncture. In addition, national acupuncture organizations (which can be found through libraries or by searching the Internet) may provide referrals to an acupuncturist.

When considering an acupuncturist ask about the following:

- Training, certification and experience;
- Estimated number of treatments needed and how much each treatment will cost (insurance companies may or may not cover the cost of acupuncture);
- One-time use of *sterile needles*.

Help your physician or other health care provider give you better coordinated and safe care by telling them about all the health approaches you use. Give them a full picture of what you do to manage your health.

[*Veronica Cavella Pedersen, L.Ac. practices Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine](#)

[**NCCIH.nih.gov](#)

