



ACUPUNCTURE FAQs

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1. Why do I get so relaxed when I get acupuncture care?

People get relaxed on the treatment table despite the fact that they have needles in them. Why? It's because when the needles guide the energy of the body to flow smoothly, the "rocks in the stream of life" dissipate, stress and struggle decrease, and the person functions better and feels good. The real task of the patient is to find a way to live life so that the 'rocks' are minimized and their energy can flow smoothly nearly all the time. As Lao Tzu, the founder of Taoism said:

Those who flow as life flows
Feel no wear, feel no tear
Need no mending, no repair.

2. How does acupuncture work?

Acupuncture balances the movement of energy in the body. When energy is blocked in one place, it is sure to be deficient in another--both blockage and deficiency cause symptoms. Treatment releases the blockages and encourages even flow, and then symptoms dissipate. I think of acupuncture as "retraining" the body--gently showing it how to be efficient, thus to feel energized and well.

3. Once I start acupuncture, do I need to be treated every week?

No. Typically, it is best to get acupuncture treatments once or twice a week when you begin care. Then as you respond and feel better, you can space out your treatments. However, steadiness at the beginning is important to improvement.

4. How long do I need to get acupuncture care?

Acupuncture began as a way to *prevent* disorder, so, in a sense, we should all get it periodically to maintain health. But nowadays most people don't seek care until they are ill. So, the best way to use acupuncture medicine is first to get the care to heal the illness, and then to *continue the care to maintain wellness*.

If you come with an illness, how often you need to see the acupuncturist depends on the complaint. An acute condition, such as a sprain or strain, an infection, a big bruise, or an acute digestive complaint, may need only 2-5 treatments to recover. If the condition is chronic, expect your care to take longer. For example, a person who has had allergies "all their life" should expect to see the acupuncturist regularly for some weeks until the immune system strengthens. With a more entrenched condition, such as asthma, migraine headaches, MS, depression, peripheral neuralgia, or irritable bowel syndrome, expect to spend some months in regular care. Afterwards it's wise to continue seasonal acupuncture care to prevent recurrences.

5. What are the needles like?

Acupuncture needles are as fine as a hair, very tiny indeed. They are **stainless steel, solid** (syringe needles are hollow), **sterile and disposable**--each is used only once. They are also very **flexible**, which means they slip in easily, and do not damage skin or muscle tissue.

6. Does acupuncture needling hurt?

Since the needles are so fine, they do not damage the skin as do syringe needles. Of course, when the needle goes in, you will feel a prick. Afterwards, you may

feel nothing at all, or you may feel a sensation such as aching, tickling, itching, feathering, release of stuckness, or movement of energy. It's good to feel these sensations because they mean you are responding to the acupuncture--moving toward wellness. Many patients actually feel adventurous on the table, trying to notice the energy moving.

7. I really hate needles! Can I get acupuncture care without needles?

Yes! Acupuncture also includes acupressure (pressing or massaging acupoints, instead of needling them), using warming herbs over acupoints, or even using cold laser over points. I offer enzyme and herb therapy which can sometimes substitute for acupuncture. However, many people who are afraid of syringes find that acupuncture needles are not distressing. I am careful to introduce needling gently--in fact, acupuncture care is a remarkably gentle form of healthcare, despite the needles.

8. What does acupuncture care treat?

Acupuncture care can treat almost any complaint, strengthen the immune system, and help you stay well. It's great for reducing stress, musculoskeletal and joint pain (back, shoulder, neck, knee, foot, jaw...), PMS and menopausal symptoms, insomnia, headaches, allergies, asthma, and digestive distress. It can stop a cold, heal bruises, minimize scars, stop reflux, constipation, diarrhea, hemorrhoids, even help you lose weight. It can improve fertility, even out the heart rhythm, lower blood pressure, reduce the side-effects of chemo- and radiotherapy...and more! Your best bet is to ask an acupuncturist, and **consult the Handouts on this website!**

9. Can acupuncture treat ADD, forgetfulness, and similar conditions?

Yes. Many points activate the brain specifically, and others strengthen the immune system and the core energetics, and thus relieve conditions such as insomnia, forgetfulness, confusion, epilepsy, ADD, and post-concussion syndrome. A special practice called *scalp acupuncture* is particularly helpful for people with post-stroke and other neurological complaints.

10. Can acupuncture care treat emotional disturbances?

Yes. All the expressions of life arise from the flow of energy, so in Asian medicine we find that physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental complaints are typically all wrapped up together. Anger or frustration, for example, create physical tightness--stiffness in the chest, cramps in the legs or abdomen, headaches, teeth grinding.... Grief creates fatigue, droopiness, a sense of collapse, and breathing difficulties. There are special points well known to release emotions, and to treat anxiety and depression.

11. Is there anything acupuncture care doesn't treat?

Yes. While most conditions can be treated with acupuncture or herbs, this is not the place to seek surgery. So if you need surgery, you must see a biomedical or osteopathic surgeon. On the other hand, acupuncture & herbal care can prepare you for surgery, can help you recover faster after surgery, and can even reduce scarring!

12. I used to have sinus infections but when I started taking supplements they went away. Why do you say the "tendency" is still there?

People often say they are "cured" of a chronic complaint such as sinus infections, reflux, constipation, asthma, knee pain, or just about anything else, and are dismayed when told "the area is still troubled." I can identify continuing trouble because I assess

the energetics of the body, and disturbances of bodily energetics *predate* physical manifestations. So someone who “used to have” migraine headaches but controls them now with pharmaceutical drugs, may still have the *energetic tendency* to migraines, which is not addressed by the drugs. Acupuncture can address this “root” issue and retrain the body energetics, so that the likelihood of the complaint decreases. Then the need for drugs also decreases, saving people money, time, and exposure to potential toxins. Cool, huh!

13. How much does acupuncture care cost?

In the DC-Baltimore region, acupuncturists charge between about \$60 - \$125 per treatment, with more for the longer Intake session. Acupuncturists typically offer a sliding scale for those who have financial difficulties.

14. Does insurance cover acupuncture care?

More insurance companies are covering a part of the cost of acupuncture care, but each person must check with their own company. Few acupuncturists accept insurance, but most provide insurance-appropriate bills to those who request them so patients can file for reimbursement.