

**Patient
Information**

Acupuncture

This leaflet will help you to understand why you may be offered acupuncture as part of your physiotherapy treatment. It will also explain what will happen when acupuncture is given and answer some of the commonly asked questions.

What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture involves inserting thin needles into your skin at certain sites on your body to relieve pain. The treatment is given by a trained physiotherapist.

Acupuncture triggers the brain to produce endorphins (natural pain relieving chemicals). Acupuncture does not work for everybody and every condition. The effects of acupuncture often increase as treatment goes on.

How is acupuncture given?

You will be asked to lie comfortably on a treatment bed. The physiotherapist will explain where the needles will be placed.

Acupuncture points will be selected that are suitable for your condition; this may not always be at the site of your pain. Single use sterile needles will be used and the needles are left in place for between 10 and 30 minutes. The physiotherapist may 'stimulate' the needles through the treatment; this involves moving the needles gently.

What should I expect?

During the treatment you may have some mild discomfort. However some people do not notice any discomfort from the acupuncture treatment.

What are the risks?

The physiotherapist will ask you questions to make sure that you are medically fit to have acupuncture. You will be told about the risks involved in having acupuncture before you are asked to sign a consent form.

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You may have bruising after the treatment and you might bleed from where the needle was inserted. Sleepiness can happen after treatment. You may have an increase in your pain after the treatment but this usually improves quickly.

There is a small risk of infection.

Some people feel unwell during treatment. If you feel light headed, nauseous (sick), clammy or faint during treatment, please tell the physiotherapist straight away.

What can I expect afterwards?

Most people are able to carry on 'as normal' but you may feel tired. Some people may feel slightly more pain but this will not last long.

Will I be able to drive home afterwards?

You are able to drive after acupuncture but if you feel tired we advise you not to travel long distances.

Do I need to do anything before treatment?

It is important that you eat and drink as normal before having acupuncture. Please wear suitable loose clothing. You may be asked to remove clothing to expose the acupuncture treatment area.

Can I take my usual tablets?

Take your usual medication as normal.

What happens next?

Your physiotherapist may want to see you for a trial of 3 to 4 treatments. This is to measure your response to acupuncture. If your pain and symptoms have not greatly improved in this time, acupuncture is unlikely to help your condition.

You have the right to stop treatment at any time.

Acupuncture is used alongside physiotherapy treatment. It is not a long term treatment option.

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Contact information

If you have any questions please contact the:

Physiotherapy Department,

Cheltenham General Hospital

Tel: 0300 422 3040

Monday to Friday, 7:30am to 5:00pm

Physiotherapy Department,

Gloucestershire Royal Hospital

Tel: 0300 422 8527

Monday to Friday, 7:30am to 5:00pm

Further information:

Acupuncture Association of Chartered Physiotherapists

Website: www.aacp.org.uk

The British Medical Acupuncture Society

Website: www.medical-acupuncture.co.uk

NHS Choices

Website: www.nhs.uk/conditions/acupuncture

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