

**Patient  
Information**

# Acupuncture

## Introduction

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 (known as acupuncture points) 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.

## How is acupuncture given?

You will be asked to lie or sit 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.

Reference No.

**GHPI0822\_10\_20**

Department

**Physiotherapy**

Review due

**October 2023**

**Patient  
Information****What are the risks?**

Before treatment is given the physiotherapist will ask you questions. This is 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.

You may notice some bruising after the treatment and you might bleed a little from where the needle was inserted. This is normal and nothing to be concerned about.

You may feel tired after acupuncture treatment, this is normal.

Following the treatment you might have an increase in your pain but this should settle within a few days.

There is a small risk of infection. If you have a fever or generally feel unwell please contact your GP for advice.

Rarely the needle may get stuck, bend or break during treatment.

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

**What can I expect after the treatment?**

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 following the treatment then we advise you not to do so.

**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.

**Patient  
Information**

## 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 check if acupuncture is helping your condition. 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 that will be offered on a regular basis.

## Contact information

If you have any questions please contact the:

**Physiotherapy Department,**

Cheltenham General Hospital

Tel: 0300 422 3040

Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm

**Physiotherapy Department,**

Gloucestershire Royal Hospital

Tel: 0300 422 8527

Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm

## Further information

**Acupuncture Association of Chartered Physiotherapists**

Website: [www.aacp.org.uk](http://www.aacp.org.uk)

**The British Medical Acupuncture Society**

Website: [www.medical-acupuncture.co.uk](http://www.medical-acupuncture.co.uk)

**NHS Choices**

Website: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/acupuncture](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/acupuncture)

Content reviewed: October 2020