Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Acupuncture

Version number: **1**
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Patient Information

Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy Department

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What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture is a health technique that is used mostly for pain relief.

Very fine sterile needles are placed into your skin to stimulate certain points in your body.

How does acupuncture work?

It works by changing how your brain and spinal cord deals with pain.

How will acupuncture help me?

Acupuncture is used to complement other forms of treatment, such as exercise, relaxation, pacing and heat.

It is also used to reduce muscle spasm and inflammation therefore reducing pain.

Other Benefits of acupuncture may be:

- Improved sleep
- Relaxation
- General improved feeling of wellbeing

Who will carry out the treatment?

Your physiotherapist will carry out the treatment.

Your physiotherapist is a qualified health professional who has completed specific additional acupuncture training.

What should I do before my acupuncture treatment?

It is important that you eat something before coming to your appointment.

Your physiotherapist will ask you to sign a consent form before you start the acupuncture treatment. This is to confirm that you understand the procedure and any possible side effects.

Please tell your physiotherapist if you:

- Are allergic to metal
- May be pregnant
- Have epilepsy or diabetes
- Have a cold or are generally feeling unwell

- Have a heart condition or low blood pressure or pacemaker
- Are taking tablets to thin your blood or on long term steroids
- Suffer from haemophilia or have a bleeding disorder
- Have a problem with your immune system
- Have or had cancer, chemotherapy/ radiotherapy or lymph node removal

What happens during the treatment?

The physiotherapist will insert a number of sterile needles into your skin in the area of pain.

During the treatment your physiotherapist will turn the needles. This is to increase the effectiveness of the treatment.

Your physiotherapist will leave the needles in place for around 20 minutes.

It is normal to feel an ache, warmth or a tingling sensation during the treatment. Please tell your physiotherapist if they become too strong.

Your physiotherapist will remove the needles at the end of the treatment and dispose of them safely.

You may need to rest for a few moments at the end of the treatment.

Is acupuncture safe?

Acupuncture is very safe. The needles we use are sterile single use needles. They will only be used to treat you then disposed of safely.

What are the possible side effects?

Side effects after the acupuncture treatment tend to be mild and do not last long.

They can include:

- Tiredness
- Thirst
- Becoming light-headed / feeling faint
- An increase in ache
- Bleeding/bruising
- Infection
- Bent/ stuck or broken needle

How many sessions of acupuncture will I need?

The physiotherapist will provide up to six acupuncture sessions.

Can I donate blood during my treatment?

You can still donate your blood whilst you are receiving acupuncture under the NHS.

References

AACP (Acupuncture association of chartered Physiotherapists) Guidelines for Safe Practice 2021

AACP Ltd, Sefton House

Contact information

Please contact us on one of the following numbers if you require further information:

Leigh Health Centre

Telephone: 0300 707 1597

wwl-tr.leighphysio@nhs.net

Platt Bridge Health Centre

Telephone: 0300 707 1772

wwl-tr.mskphysio-bostonhouse@nhs.net

Wigan Health Centre, Boston House

Telephone: 0300 707 1113

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