Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Acupuncture Treatment at Home

Version number: **7**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

Patient Information

Pain service

- Author ID: SD
- Leaflet ref: Pain 033
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Introduction

Acupuncture at home will require you to attend at least 3 appointments at the acupuncture clinic so that you can be taught how to do self-acupuncture, you will be sent 3 appointments so that we can assess if this helps you and further appointments will be given if needed. This involves using only 4 needles, one in each hand and one in each foot. If you cannot reach your feet, it is important that you arrange for someone to come with you who will be willing to do this for you. It is important that you try to keep all the appointments.

The main reason for teaching you how to carry out this treatment on yourself or a designated person is to ensure you continue to get pain relief in the home for yourself or the specific person with on-going pain problems.

It is essential that the following information is observed and adhered to carefully, as previously discussed:

- If spectacles are usually required for close up work, please make sure you wear them.

- Before starting treatment, make sure that the areas to be treated are clean and that there are no signs of irritation or infection (e.g. red or sore areas, fragile skin, white headed spot or pus). Should any of these symptoms be present **do not** proceed with the treatment (contact your registered GP if you are concerned about your skin condition).

- Please ensure good hygiene throughout the treatments; the person performing the procedure should wash their hands before opening the disposable acupuncture needle packs and starting the treatment - wash and dry the areas of needle insertion - use the metal needle handles – **do not** touch the needle points.

- Insert the needles into the allocated places

- Feet - two fingers below the space between the big toe and the second toe



- Hand - web space between the thumb and index finger.



- Once the individual needle packet has been opened, the needle must be used or disposed of in the sharps bin. This is because the needle will no longer be sterile.

- Leave the needles in place for 10 minutes initially, then stimulate and leave in for a further 20 minutes, 30 minutes in total. The needles can be gently stimulated by manually rotating them, either by you (the patient) or the person administering the

acupuncture, as shown to you previously in the clinic. This treatment can be administered twice weekly

- A designated sharps container is to be used to dispose of needles. A purpose-made sharps container will be supplied to you.

- On completing the treatment, the disposable needles should be removed, ensuring that all needles are accounted for and disposed of carefully in the designated sharps container. This is to prevent any potential needle stick injuries.

- Ensure that you are comfortable and that a clean tissues or cotton wool is at hand in case of any minor bleeding following the treatment.

- Unused disposable needles that are still in their sterile wrapping and sharps container must be stored carefully in a clean, dry place, out of reach of children and animals.

- Further supplies of needles may be obtained from the hospital as advised.

- Once the sharps container is full it must be sealed carefully, and your clinician will provide you with instructions on how to dispose of it.

- If you have any concerns, complications, or other queries regarding the therapy, please contact the Pain nurses or pain secretaries on Telephone 01942 773099 and leave a message with your full name and hospital number and what the query is.

What to do if the needle gets stuck or breaks

Don’t panic. This is very rare. If the needle gets stuck, try rotating it in the opposite direction that was used before. Try to relax the muscle it is stuck in and hopefully this will allow you to ease the needle out. In the unlikely event that a needle breaks when you remove it, you may still be able to take the needle remnant out as normal, if there is still a length of needle

protruding using a pair of tweezers.

If the needle breaks close to the skin, mark around the entry site where the broken needle is, cover with a dressing and attend A & E. Take with you an unopened sample of the needle.

Are there any side effects?

As with any treatment we offer there is always the possibility of side effects, these can include:

- Reduction in blood pressure which may make you feel faint
- Reduction in blood glucose, please make you eat and drink before you attend
- Bleeding sometimes there can be minimal localised bleeding. Slight pressure can be applied with a clean dry cotton bud.
- Bruising, sometimes a small bruise may appear at the site. This will be more common if you are on blood thinning medicines.
- Flare ups, unfortunately this can happen but is very rare. Usually this will settle.
- Infection, Due to us piercing the skin there is a small risk of infection. Therefore, you need to ensure the area and your hands are clean before starting the acupuncture. If you feel there is the possibility that an infection has occurred, stop doing the acupuncture and see your GP, you may need some antibiotics.
- Failure, unfortunately there is no guarantee that acupuncture will be effective for every person.

If the person receiving the treatment becomes pregnant or is started on blood thinning drugs like clopidogrel or warfarin

Please contact the pain nurses or secretaries on Telephone 01942 773099 and leave a message stating your full name and hospital number and letting us know that this has happened. We will then be able to offer you further advice.

It is very important that you attend any appointments made for you with either, the Doctor; Nurse; Physiotherapist; Occupational therapist or the Psychologist. If you cannot attend, please cancel the appointment, and re-arrange, failure to cancel will result in discharge from the pain service and you will need to be re referred by your GP if you wish to be seen again.

Contact information

Royal Albert Edward Infirmary, Telephone 01942 244000

Leigh Health Centre, Telephone 01942 483413

Wrightington Hospital, Telephone 01942 256305



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