

# Acupuncture

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Acupuncture helps your body use its own natural ways to reduce or relieve pain. Acupuncture can also improve how well your body works in areas that are causing you problems. Acupuncture can be used with other medical treatments to relieve or reduce pain. It can often work when medical treatments have failed.

This handout describes a bit about acupuncture and what happens when you come to the Michael G. DeGroot Pain Clinic for treatments.

## **How does acupuncture work?**

Acupuncture uses very small, narrow needles. These needles are sterile, stainless steel and are thrown out after one use. The needles are inserted through the skin and tissues at specific points on your body. This causes the body to make its own pain relieving chemicals. These chemicals are called endorphins and neurotransmitters. These chemicals help your muscles relax and increase blood flow.

## **Is it safe?**

Acupuncture is very safe. There are usually no problems associated with it. If you have a pacemaker, electrical stimulation (using needles connected to an electrical current) should be avoided unless approved by your cardiologist (heart doctor).

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## **Does it hurt?**

Some people feel a very mild discomfort as the needles are inserted, but many people feel no pain at all. Once the needles are in place, there is very little discomfort. Many of our patients find acupuncture relaxing.

## **I am not convinced it will help me, do I have to believe in it for it to work?**

Not believing in acupuncture will not affect how it works. Acupuncture has been done on animals and they get better. Many people who do not believe in it or have a negative attitude about it are pleased with how it works. Patients often tell us that acupuncture reduces their pain, keeps them going and helps them cope.

Keep in mind that a positive attitude toward wellness may help with all types of treatments.

## **How many acupuncture treatments are needed?**

The number of treatment is different for everyone. It depends on the person and the condition being treated. Relief may be immediate, a few hours after treatment or after a few days. It may take 4 to 6 treatments before any difference is felt.

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## What happens on the day of treatment?

### Before your appointment

If you are unwell, have a fever call us. Please try to call at least 24 hours before your appointment. 905-521-2100, ext. 44621.

Eat a light meal.

Come to the Michael G. DeGroot Pain Clinic 10 minutes before the time written on your appointment card.

Bring a list of all the medications you take with you.

### When you come to your appointment

- ✓ When you first arrive at the Clinic check in with the business clerk.
- ✓ A nurse will talk with you about:
  - any pain you are having
  - medications you take
  - effectiveness of pain treatments (or last acupuncture treatment)
  - any new health concerns
- ✓ Your heart rate and blood pressure will be taken.
- ✓ You will change into a hospital gown.
- ✓ You will lie on a table and then the doctor will begin the treatment.
- ✓ Treatments last about 20 minutes to ½ hour.

### After treatment

If possible, take a short rest. Some patients are very relaxed after treatment. Strong exercise is not recommended just after treatment.

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