

Acupuncture

Acupuncture is a treatment derived from ancient Chinese medicine. Fine needles are inserted at certain sites in the body for therapeutic or preventative purposes.



How acupuncture works

Western medical acupuncture is the use of acupuncture following a medical diagnosis. It involves stimulating sensory nerves under the skin and in the muscles of the body.

This results in the body producing natural substances, such as pain-relieving endorphins. It's likely that these naturally released substances are responsible for the beneficial effects experienced with acupuncture.

A course of acupuncture usually creates longer lasting pain relief than when a single treatment is used.

Traditional acupuncture is based on the belief that an energy, or "life force", flows through the body in channels called meridians. This life force is known as Qi (pronounced "chee").

Practitioners who adhere to traditional beliefs about acupuncture believe that when Qi doesn't flow freely through the body, this can cause illness. They also believe acupuncture can restore the flow of Qi, and so restore health.

Uses of acupuncture

Acupuncture practitioners – sometimes called acupuncturists – use acupuncture to treat a wide range of health conditions. However, the use of acupuncture isn't always based on rigorous scientific evidence.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) provides guidelines for the NHS on the use of treatments and care of patients.

Currently, NICE only recommends considering acupuncture as a treatment option for:

- persistent lower back pain
- chronic tension-type headaches
- migraines

Acupuncture is also often used to treat other musculoskeletal conditions (of the bones and muscles) and pain conditions, including:

- chronic pain, such as neck pain
- joint pain
- dental pain
- postoperative pain

However, in many conditions where acupuncture is used, there's less good quality evidence to draw any clear conclusions over its effectiveness compared with other treatments.

Treatment Costs £30 for 1 hour consultation and treatment.