

## Acupuncture

Please read this information carefully and ask your acupuncturist if there is anything that you do not understand.

### What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture is a form of therapy in which very fine sterile stainless steel needles are inserted into the skin at various points on the body. Acupuncture works by releasing natural chemicals including morphine-like substances in the body, such as endorphins, which can ease a variety of symptoms.

### Is acupuncture safe?

Acupuncture is generally very safe. Serious side effects are very rare – less than one per 10,000 treatments.

### Does acupuncture have side effects?

You need to be aware that:

- up to 9% (nine in 100) of patients feel woozy during or after their first treatment and very rarely fainting can occur
- drowsiness occurs after treatment in a small number of patients, and if affected, you are advised not to drive until you are fully recovered
- minor bleeding or bruising occurs after acupuncture in about 3% (three in 100) of treatments
- pain during treatment occurs in about 1% (one in 100) of treatments
- existing symptoms can get worse after treatment (less than 3% of patients). You should tell your acupuncture practitioner about this, but it is usually a good sign.

In addition, if there are particular risks that apply in your case, your acupuncture practitioner will discuss these with you.



## Is there anything your acupuncture practitioner needs to know?

Apart from the usual medical details, it is important that you let your acupuncture practitioner know:

- if you have ever experienced a fit, faint or funny turn
- if you have a pacemaker or any other electrical implants
- if you have a bleeding disorder
- if you are taking anti-coagulants or any other medication
- if you have damaged heart valves or have any other particular risk of infection
- if you are pregnant
- if you have a metal allergy
- if you are immunocompromised
- if you are HIV positive or have any other blood borne infections. Single-use, sterile, disposable needles are used in the clinic.

## Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns about your acupuncture, please call your acupuncture practitioner via the Pain Team secretaries on:

020 7808 2771            or            020 7808 2797

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