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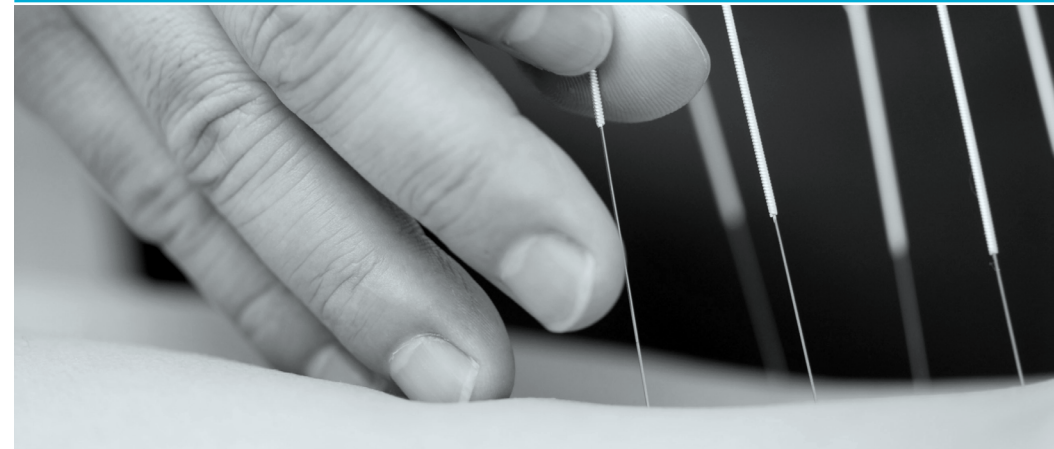
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# Information for patients Acupuncture and Physiotherapy



## Physiotherapy



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## What is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is where fine needles are inserted at specific points on the body. It is one of the oldest recorded forms of medicine, having been used for over 3,000 years in China.

The Traditional Chinese Medicine view is that Qi (energy) flows round the body in channels called Meridians. Needles are placed in specific acupuncture points in the body helping to stimulate Qi and correct the flow of this Qi energy and return it to its normal state.

Modern science has shown that acupuncture stimulates the brain to produce natural pain relieving chemicals, i.e. endorphins. These assist the body to heal itself and give pain relief.

## Is Acupuncture safe?

Acupuncture is a safe treatment. The needles used are pre-sterilised and disposable. Chartered physiotherapists are trained to use the strictest hygiene practices.

## Are there any side effects?

There are minimal possible side effects from acupuncture. However, you need to be aware that:

- Drowsiness occurs after treatment in a small number of patients and, if affected, you are advised not to drive until you are fully recovered. (AACP Guidelines for safe practice booklet).
- Minor bleeding or bruising occurs after acupuncture in about 3% of treatments.
- Local pain during treatment occurs in about 1% of treatments which then settles.
- Existing symptoms can get worse after treatment (less than 3% of patients). You should tell your therapist about this but it is usually a good sign.
- Fainting can occur in certain patients, particularly at the first treatment. In addition, if there are particular risks that apply in your case, your therapist will discuss these with you.

## Why a physiotherapist?

Chartered Physiotherapists are able to combine acupuncture with other treatment methods. All Chartered Physiotherapists who practice acupuncture are trained to provide simple pain relief, but some may be skilled in the treatment of more complex problems.

## What happens on my first appointment?

You will have an assessment by a Chartered Physiotherapist. This may take up to one hour and will involve questions about your problem, general health and lifestyle.

It is helpful if you can bring with you a list of any tablets or medication that you are currently taking. It is likely that you will need to undress so that the physiotherapist can examine the affected area. At the end of the assessment your physiotherapist will discuss their findings with you and suggest a treatment plan. Treatment will vary according to the problem but might include hands on treatments, exercise or acupuncture. You will have the opportunity to ask questions and be involved in deciding with the physiotherapist which treatment will be used.

## Will it work for me?

Research has shown that most people gain relief from pain with acupuncture. It does not work for everybody and every condition but, frequently, good results are achieved when more conventional medicine has failed. There is nothing spiritual about it and you don't need to believe in acupuncture for it to work for you. The effects of acupuncture are cumulative, with pain-relief building up as treatment progresses. Some people are particularly good responders, while others may see little benefit until they have had a few treatments; this is more likely with a long term condition. Occasionally, the condition may become slightly worse at first. This is not a bad sign, as it usually means the condition will respond.

## Chaperone policy

If you feel that you require a chaperone during your assessment and/or treatment session, please ask a member of staff and this will be arranged.

## Consent

After the treatment has been explained, we require you to sign a form giving your consent before treatment can start. This will be stored in your treatment records.

## Contact Details:

Physiotherapy out-patient department  
Tel: **01691 404464** Web: [www.rjah.nhs.uk](http://www.rjah.nhs.uk)

## Sources of Information:

British Medical Acupuncture Society (BMAS)  
Web: [www.medical-acupuncture.co.uk](http://www.medical-acupuncture.co.uk)

Acupuncture Association of  
Chartered Physiotherapists (AACP)  
Web: [www.aacp.org.uk](http://www.aacp.org.uk)