

Acupuncture



What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture is traditional Chinese medicine where needles are put on a person's body. The point of acupuncture is to rebalance the flow of energy in the body (known as Qi, pronounced "chee"). Traditional Chinese medicine says that Qi connects through "channels" or "meridians" in the body. Sometimes these channels can get blocked from being sick, trauma, injuries, or side-effects from medicine. Other health behaviors that can affect the Qi flow are poor nutrition, too much work, not getting enough sleep, emotions, and stress.

Who should try acupuncture?

Acupuncture can be very helpful for people with pain in their body. Many clinics across the United States (US) have found that acupuncture can be very helpful for their patients. Research studies have found that people who try acupuncture have:

- lower pain
- less medicine to take
- less side-effects from medicine (such as constipation, nausea, and vomiting)
- less inflammation (swelling) and more healing
- less anxiety
- better sleep

What if I don't like needles?

Some people may avoid acupuncture because of the needles. But these needles are very thin (like a strand of hair). They hardly attach to the skin. Some people say that the needles "stick to the skin" (like a sticker). Other people like to refer to the needles as "whiskers" because they bend like the whiskers of a dog or cat.

What should I expect during the treatment?

Each treatment starts with an exam. An acupuncturist will find the best place on the body to stick the needles. This exam looks at a person's tongue, neck, pulse on the wrist, stomach and feet. Needles are placed on different parts of the body. They improve circulation and stimulate the nervous system. The needles are not always placed on the area where you may have pain. The needles stay in the pressure points for 10 to 20 minutes. Many people find this treatment very relaxing, and they end up taking a nap!

Pain Medicine

How soon should I expect to see results?

While each person experiences results at different times, many people feel their symptoms get better during their first treatment. After each acupuncture session the body will learn to rebalance the body's energy for longer time periods. Think of acupuncture as a gym; each time a person works out their muscles get stronger. Acupuncture can help your body gain back strength in an area that may be weak.

How many treatments do I need?

Each person will need a different number of acupuncture treatments. Some people may start with treatment once a week and will later only need it once a month. At CHLA, we offer an introduction to acupuncture sessions. This will help families decide if acupuncture is right for them.

Who do I talk to if I want my child to start acupuncture?

Please talk to your child's medical team for more information or to schedule an appointment for treatment.

If you have questions, please contact our Pain Management Clinic.

Phone: (323) 361-7686

Email: PainMedicine@chla.usc.edu.