

which have not been helped by orthodox medicine.

Is there anything your acupuncturist needs to know?

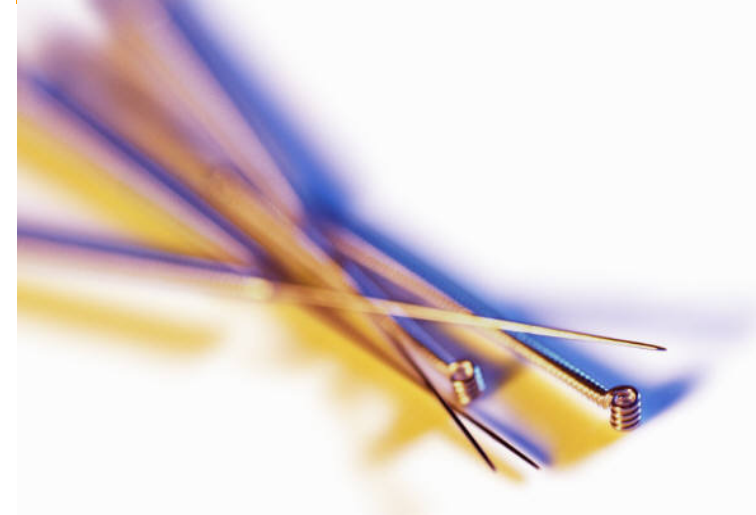
Apart from the usual medical details, it is important that you let your acupuncturist know:

- 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 infection

It is important that you have read and understand this information.

Before beginning a course of acupuncture treatment, your acupuncturist is obliged to have your verbal consent to this method of treatment. Your consent will be recorded in your clinical notes.

Acupuncture Treatment



INFORMATION

for patients, families and carers



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Acupuncture Treatment

Please read this information carefully before treatment and ask for more information if there is anything you do not understand.

What is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture, (where fine needles are inserted in the body at specific points) is one of the oldest recorded forms of medicine, having been used for over 3,000 years in China. We do not know fully how it produces its effects, but there are several theories on how it works – the important thing is that it works on some people and that side effects are extremely rare.

Modern science has shown that acupuncture stimulates the brain to produce natural pain relieving chemicals - endorphins.

Is Acupuncture safe?

Acupuncture is perfectly safe when practiced by someone with appropriate training. The needles used in St Margaret's Somerset Hospice are pre-sterilised and disposable.

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
- Minor bleeding or bruising occurs after acupuncture in about 3% of treatments
- Pain during treatment occurs in about 1% of treatments
- Symptoms can get worse after treatment (less than 3% of patients). You should tell your acupuncturist 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 acupuncturist will discuss these with you

In the Hospice there may be occasions when we use semi – permanent studs, spheres, electrical stimulation of needles or a stimplus machine (acupuncture without needles). Any of these would be explained in more detail if their use was considered appropriate.

Will it work for me?

Research has shown that many people gain relief from pain with acupuncture. It does not work for everybody and every condition but good results are often 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 chronic condition. Occasionally, the condition may become slightly worse at first. This is not a bad sign, as it usually means the condition will respond.

Many conditions, both recent and long-standing, could respond well to acupuncture. These could include, back and neck pain, headaches, respiratory problems, gynaecology and stress-related problems, as well as some bladder, bowel and skin conditions. In the Hospice, as well as pain relief, acupuncture may be used to help alleviate the symptoms of breathlessness, nausea and vomiting and anxiety. It is often worth trying acupuncture for conditions