

## **ANSWERING YOUR ACUPUNCTURE QUESTIONS**

### **WHAT IS ACUPUNCTURE?**

Acupuncture is a method of encouraging the body to promote natural healing and to improve functioning. This is done by inserting needles and sometimes applying electrical stimulation at very precise acupuncture points.

### **HOW DOES ACUPUNCTURE WORK?**

The classical Chinese explanation is that channels of energy run in regular patterns through the body and over its surface. These energy channels, called meridians, are like rivers flowing through the body to irrigate and nourish the tissues. An obstruction in the movement of these energy rivers is like a dam that backs up into other rivers.

The meridians can be influenced by needling the acupuncture points; the acupuncture needles unblock the obstructions at the dams, and reestablish the regular flow through the meridians. Acupuncture treatments can therefore help the body's internal organs correct imbalances in their digestion, absorption, and energy production activities.

The modern scientific explanation is that needling the acupuncture points stimulates the nervous system to release chemicals in the muscles, spinal cord, and brain. These chemicals will either change the experience of pain, or they will trigger the release of other chemicals and hormones which influence the body's own internal regulating system.

The improved energy and biochemical balance produced by acupuncture results in stimulating the body's natural healing abilities, and in promoting physical and emotional well-being.

### **DOES ACUPUNCTURE REALLY WORK?**

Yes. In the past 2,000 years, more people have been successfully treated with acupuncture than with all other health modalities combined. Today, acupuncture is practiced widely in Asia, the Soviet Union, and Europe. It is now being used more and more in America by patients and physicians. Acupuncture treatments can be given at the same time other techniques are being used, such as conventional Western medicine, chiropractic, and homeopathic prescriptions.

### **WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF ACUPUNCTURE?**

Acupuncture is a system which can influence three areas of health:

- **promotion of health and well-being**
- **prevention of illness**
- **treatment of various medical conditions**

While acupuncture is often associated with pain control, in the hands of a well-trained practitioner it has much broader applications. Acupuncture can be effective as the only treatment or in conjunction with other medical treatments. The **World Health Organization** recognizes the use of acupuncture in the treatment of a wide range of medical problems, including:

- **Digestive disorders:** gastritis and hyperacidity, spastic colon, constipation, diarrhea
- **Respiratory disorders:** sinusitis, sore throat, bronchitis, asthma, recurrent chest infections
- **Neurological and muscular disorders:** headaches, TMJ, neck pain, frozen shoulder, tennis elbow, various forms of tendinitis, low back pain, sciatica, osteoarthritis
- **Urinary, menstrual, and reproductive problems**

Acupuncture is particularly useful in resolving physical problems related to **tension** and **stress** and **emotional conditions**.

#### **HOW MANY TREATMENTS WILL I NEED?**

The number of treatments needed differs from person to person. For complex or long-standing conditions, one or two treatments a week for several months may be recommended. For acute problems, fewer visits are usually required. For overall health and well being treatments, once every few months may be recommended.

#### **ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS TO THE TREATMENT?**

Usually there are no side effects. As energy is redirected in the body, internal chemicals and hormones are stimulated and healing begins to take place. Occasionally the original symptoms worsen for a few days, or other general changes in appetite, sleep, bowel or urination patterns, or emotional state may be triggered. These should not cause concern, as they are simply indications that the acupuncture is starting to work. It is quite common with the first one or two treatments to have a sensation of deep relaxation or even mild disorientation immediately following the treatment. These should pass within a short time, and never require anything more than a bit of rest to overcome.

#### **WHAT ARE THE NEEDLES LIKE? DO THEY HURT?**

People experience acupuncture needling differently. Most patients feel only minimal pain as the needles are inserted, some feel no pain at all. Once the needles are in place, there is usually no pain felt. Acupuncture needles are very thin and solid and are made from stainless steel. The point is smooth (not hollow with cutting edges like a hypodermic needle) and insertion through the skin is not as painful as injections or blood sampling. The risk of bruising and skin irritation is less than when using a hollow needle. Because we use sterile single use needles, there is very minimal risk of infection from the treatments.

#### **DO I HAVE TO BELIEVE IN ACUPUNCTURE FOR IT TO WORK?**

No. Acupuncture is used successfully on cats, dogs, horses and other animals. These animal patients do not understand or believe in the process that helps them get better. A positive attitude toward wellness may reinforce the effects of the treatment received, just as a negative attitude may hinder the effects of acupuncture or any other treatment. A neutral attitude ('I don't know if I really believe in this') will not block the treatment results.

#### **IS ACUPUNCTURE COVERED BY HEALTH INSURANCE?**

Some insurance companies cover acupuncture. We would be glad to check if yours has acupuncture as a covered benefit.

#### **HOW MUCH WILL A TREATMENT COST?**

Acupuncture treatments are \$45 per session.

#### **CAN I GET A CHIROPRACTIC TREATMENT AND ACUPUNCTURE SESSION ON THE SAME VISIT?**

Yes, many patients have both treatments on the same visit, others prefer to schedule them separately.

#### **WHO WILL BE PERFORMING THESE TREATMENTS?**

Dr. Ben Winecoff is a doctor of chiropractic and a certified acupuncturist and will be administering all Treatments.