

Frequently Asked Questions about Acupuncture

Does it hurt?

Not often, but sometimes it does. The auricular (ear) points can be a little more sensitive than body points. Caffeine, nicotine and sugar can cause a heightened sensitivity. It is best to avoid these for 1 hour prior to your treatment. Acupuncturists have different insertion styles. Stephanie has a light style that is painless about 95% of the time.

How much does it cost?

It is important to Campus Health Services to provide a cost effective acupuncture clinic. We are offering group acupuncture for \$15 per session. You can pay cash or have the visit charged to your Louie account.

Who can come?

This clinic is available to any NAU student, faculty or staff member.

What does it treat?

Most everything. It's sort of like asking "What does Western Medicine treat?" **TCM** *Traditional Chinese Medicine* is a complete system of medicine. Acupuncture is a large part of that system. Community style acupuncture is best suited for treating mood issues, (anxiety, PTSD, depression, stress, anger), maintenance of sobriety, joint pain, support for autoimmune disorders, facial paralysis, smoking cessation, eating disorders, headaches, all types of pain, digestive upset, menstrual cramps, PMS and more.

How does it work?

In TCM we assess two main areas.

1) Meridian diagnosis:

You may be familiar with charts of acupuncture points. The points are on pathways called "meridians." Meridians are pathways of electrical currents. They do not always follow nerve pathways. Acupuncture points are specific locations of higher electrical conductivity. When you are experiencing pain in a particular location, you may also be aware of pain in a different location on the same meridian. The acupuncturist looks for patterns of pain, discomfort or disease. Acupuncture points may be chosen based on these observations. It is said in TCM, "Where the mind goes, the qi follows." Acupuncture stimulates the movement of the mind as well as the movement of blood flow.

2) Internal organ diagnosis:

You may hear your acupuncturist talk about your "liver", "heart", "kidney", "spleen" etc. This can be misleading as the TCM practitioner is not talking about western anatomy. Each "organ" in TCM is considered to have many different functions. Specific signs and symptoms signal disharmony.

For example, the "spleen" organ is said to have the functions of:

- a) Transforming food into energy, failure leads to fatigue, bloating, pale tongue, and pale lips.
- b) Lifting and holding - failure leads to puffy tongue, weight gain, bruising easily, prolapses.

The “spleen” is said to be injured by study, worry, damp, cold, sweet and raw foods.

Acupuncture points have been observed and used for over thousands of years. These points have effects on organ systems. For example it has been observed that stimulation to specific points on the inner ankle can affect the “spleen” symptoms above.

Acupuncture can also act to renew blood flow to an area of chronic compromise. This is known as a “counter irritant”.

What is the training to be an acupuncturist?

An accredited college of TCM grants a master degree upon completion. The graduate must then sit for the NCCAOM (National Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine) exam. Most states require a state license as well, which is overseen by the board of medical examiners.

Why does my acupuncturist look at my tongue?

We observe the coat, body, color of the tongue to give information about the internal organ systems.

Why does she take my pulse?

We feel three positions in each pulse location. Each location gives information about a specific organ system.

Are there side effects? Is it safe?

Acupuncture is safe when performed by a qualified professional. Side effects may include slight bruising.

How do I prepare for my session?

It is best to arrive neither hungry nor full and hydrated. It is best to avoid caffeine, nicotine and sugar for 1 hour prior to your treatment.

What is “Community Acupuncture”?

Community acupuncture is group acupuncture. The feeling is much like a group meditation.

How often should I be treated?

In China some receive treatment daily for an acute issues. Some people come more frequently in times of stress or pain. You cannot come too often. Even if you have nothing bothering you it is good health maintenance to receive treatment every couple of weeks.

Suggested reading:

Between Heaven and Earth A Guide to Chinese Medicine
by Harriet Beinfield and Efrem Korngold