

FAQ and Acupuncture

1. Does acupuncture hurt?

No! Acupuncture needles are about as thin as a piece of hair. Most often, the needles will not be felt by the patient. Sometimes a deep aching or tingling is felt and this is called “Da qi” or the arrival of qi to the needle. It is sensation, but will ease into a state of relaxation. If a needle feels sharp or painful, it’s a signal to your acupuncturist that something may need to be adjusted. While some needles may illicit more sensation than others, acupuncture should not cause pain and your practitioner will work with you to make sure you stay as relaxed and comfortable as possible during your treatments.

2. Is acupuncture safe?

Acupuncture has been considered an extremely safe medicine for thousands of years. Acupuncture needles are single use and sterile and have been FDA approved medical devices since the mid 90’s. Acupuncture can help relieve pain and other conditions without the risk of surgery or medication. Acupuncturists are highly trained in four-year accredited graduate school programs, pass and maintain national certification and meet all state requirements for education, safety and sanitation.

3. What should I expect in my first appointment?

During your first visit, your acupuncturist will take a history of your chief complaint. Next, they will ask you the “ten traditional questions” of Chinese medicine. These questions will touch on aspects of your health that may not seem related to your chief complaint but give your acupuncturist an overall look into what may be causing your condition. Next, your practitioner will feel your radial pulses and look at your tongue as further tools of diagnosis. Acupuncture needles will then be inserted and you will be left to rest or nap for 20-40mins. When necessary, your practitioner will use adjunct techniques to enhance your treatments such as cupping, gua sha, moxibustion, herbal medicine or massage.

4. How many sessions will I need to feel better?

The goal is for you to feel a shift in your health after each treatment. Acupuncture reminds the body how to conduct the smooth flow of qi on its own. At first, these shifts may only last a day or two. As you continue treatment, the relief you feel will last longer and longer until eventually you will only need an occasional tune up or nothing at all! The trajectory of your presenting condition is very unique to you and your acupuncturist may see you a few times before being able to give you an accurate time line. In the most general sense, acute conditions could take 1-4 treatments and chronic conditions could take 8-12 treatments. The goal is to restore balance in as few treatments as possible! Wellness is unique to you and acupuncture takes all factors into account to help you reach your individual health goals.

5. Should I consult my doctor before receiving treatment?

It’s always a good idea to keep your doctor up to date on your health! Many physicians are familiar with, and refer to acupuncturists regularly. With your written consent, you can also give your acupuncturist permission to communicate with your doctors directly.

6. What are the side effects of acupuncture?

Fantastic health and a general state of ease 😊! Negative side effects from acupuncture are bleeding or bruising at the side of insertion, superficial burns from moxa, organ puncture and

nerve damage. Serious side effects like the ones listed are EXTREAMLY rare. Acupuncturists are highly trained and maintain licensure to ensure minimal risk to patients.

7. What is cupping?

Cupping is a technique that uses suction to lift skin and tissue to release muscles and fascia rather than the pushing like in a traditional massage. The technique used here at the clinic is called “fire cupping” and involves glass cups that are warmed with a flame to create a vacuum of air and then paced on the body. Once the cups are placed on the body, they can be left stationary to focus on one muscle or may be slide over a larger area, lifting and release a group of muscles. Some indications for cupping include but are not limited to; muscle tightness, sore muscles, seasonal allergies, colds and flus effecting the lungs, asthma, digestive problems, headaches and general pain. The risks associated with cupping are most often limited to bruising at the sight of application. Other less common risks associated are burns, increased muscle tightness or fatigue, nausea and skin infections. While generally a low risk procedure, folks with bleeding disorders, DVT or open skin lesions in the area of intended application may want to avoid cupping.

8. What is Gua Sha?

Gua sha is translated as “scraping”. It is a technique that is used by acupuncturists and western medical professionals (chiropractors refer to it as Gaston’s Technique) alike for a variety of conditions. Gua Sha is almost like a tool assisted massage in which tissue is compressed and a hicky like bruise comes to the surface. This bruise is referred to as “sha” and encourages the body to send healing fluids and compounds to that area. More simply put, it’s pushing out old stagnant fluids and encouraging fresh blood to arrive at the tissue intended. Gua sha boosts collagen production, increases blood flow, encourages lymphatic drainage, decreases inflammation, relieves pain, releases tight muscles. It may be performed as an adjunct technique for pain, headaches, anxiety, cold and flu, high blood pressure, insomnia, anxiety and muscle knots and fatigue. Risks associated are pain and bruising at the site, and it is possible, but unlikely, that the skin could be broken. Folks with bleeding disorders or on blood thinners may be advised to avoid gua sha due to risk of increased bruising or bleeding under the skin.

9. What is Tui Na?

Tui Na is translated as “push, pull” and refers to Chinese medical massage. There are many techniques of manipulation that fall under the category of tui na but all involve using the hands as tools to find areas of tightness or stagnation and then working to encourage free flow of qi and blood in that area. Tui na can be used over the back, abdomen, arms, legs, feet, hands, chest and head for general relaxation and pain relief or for more specific imbalances in channels that run through our bodies.

10. What is Qi Gong?

Qi Gong is an ancient form of meditative movement that helps to correct and direct the flow of energy in the body. It is the medicinal, rather than martial art form, of Tai Chi. It links breath with gentle movements to encourage the integration of the body, spirit and mind. Qi Gong reduces pain, increases mood, improves coordination, improves balance, mitigates fatigue, lowers blood pressure and improves a variety of conditions associated.