

What is cupping?

Cupping is a therapy designed to stimulate the flow of blood and Qi within the superficial muscle layers. It is used for sore muscles, tension, neck pain and the common cold. In this therapy, your acupuncturist will place small glass or plastic "cups" over specific areas on your body. A vacuum is created under the cup using heat or suction. They may be moved over an affected area or left in place. You may leave the office looking as though a large octopus gave you a big hug. There is no need for alarm. The slight redness will quickly dissipate.

What is Gwa Sha?

Gwa Sha is another technique used to release muscle tension, tightness and constriction. A specialized tool is used to gently scrape or rub the skin over a problem area. Gwa Sha feels a bit like a deep massage. This too may leave some slight redness that will quickly dissipate.

What is Tui Na?

Tui Na translates as "push grasp." It is a massage technique that moves Qi in various parts of the body. It is used to relieve muscle pain, tension and inflammation and to heal injuries.



What is moxabustion?

Moxibustion is a treatment that uses an herb called mugwort. It may be burned on the handle of a needle, above the skin, on salt or on a slice of ginger. This is used to "warm" acupuncture points or areas in order to quicken the healing process.

Why did my acupuncturist recommend herbs?

Herbs can be a powerful adjunct to acupuncture care. They are used to strengthen, build and support the body or to clear it of excess problems like a cold, fever or acute pain. Your practitioner may suggest starting with herbs and then adding acupuncture to your treatment in the future. This is suggested to build up your internal strength so you can receive the full benefits acupuncture has to offer.

Will my insurance cover acupuncture?

Insurance coverage varies from state to state. Contact your insurance provider to learn what kind of care is covered. Here are a few questions to ask:

Will my plan cover acupuncture?

How many visits per calendar year?

Do I need a referral?

Do I have a co-pay?

Do I have a deductible? If yes, has it been met?

Acupuncture is recognized by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the World Health Organization (WHO) as effective in treating these conditions:

- Addiction – alcohol, drug, smoking
- Anxiety
- Arthritis
- Asthma
- Bronchitis
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Chronic fatigue
- Colitis
- Common cold
- Constipation
- Dental pain
- Depression
- Diarrhea
- Digestive trouble
- Dizziness
- Dysentery
- Emotional problems
- Eye problems
- Facial palsy/tics
- Fatigue
- Fertility
- Fibromyalgia
- Gingivitis
- Headache
- Hiccough
- Incontinence
- Indigestion
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Low back pain
- Menopause
- Menstrual irregularities
- Migraine
- Morning sickness
- Nausea
- Osteoarthritis
- Pain
- PMS
- Pneumonia
- Reproductive problems
- Rhinitis
- Sciatica
- Seasonal affective disorder (SAD)
- Shoulder pain
- Sinusitis
- Sleep disturbances
- Smoking cessation
- sore throat
- Stress
- Tennis elbow
- Trigeminal neuralgia
- Vomiting
- Wrist pain



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Acupuncture Questions & Answers



What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture is an effective form of health care that has evolved into a complete and holistic medical system. Practitioners of acupuncture and Chinese medicine have used this noninvasive medical system to diagnose and help millions of people get well and stay healthy.

An acupuncturist will place fine, sterile needles at specific acupoints on the body. This activates the body's Qi and promotes natural healing by enhancing recuperative power, immunity and physical and emotional health. It also can improve overall function and well-being. It is a safe, painless and effective way to treat a wide variety of medical problems.

What is Qi and how does it travel?

At the core of this ancient medicine is the philosophy that Qi (pronounced "chee"), or Life Energy, flow throughout the body. Qi helps to animate the body and protect it from illness, pain and disease. A person's health is influenced by the quality, quantity, and balance of Qi.

Qi circulates through specific pathways called meridians. There are 14 main meridian pathways throughout the body. Each is connected to specific organs and glands. Meridian pathways are like rivers. Where a river flows, it transports life-giving water that nourishes the land, plants and people. In the same way, meridian pathways transport life giving Qi to nourish and energize every cell, organ, gland, tissue, and muscle.

When Qi flows freely throughout the body, one enjoys good physical, mental and emotional well-being. An obstruction of Qi anywhere in the body is like a dam, backing up the flow in one area and restricting it in others. This blockage can hinder the distribution of the nourishment that the body requires to function optimally.

What can affect Qi?

Many things influence the quality, quantity and balance of Qi. Physical and emotional trauma, stress, lack of exercise, overexertion, seasonal changes, diet, accidents or excessive activity can lead to a blockage or imbalance of Qi.

Normally, when this imbalance occurs, the body naturally bounces back, returning to a balanced state of health and well-being. When the disruption to Qi is prolonged or excessive, or if the body is in a weakened state, then illness, pain or disease can set in.

What will my acupuncturist do?

During the initial exam a full health history will be taken. Questions will be asked regarding symptoms, health and lifestyle. Your acupuncturist also may check pulses and your tongue and may conduct a physical exam. This information is then organized to create a complete, accurate and comprehensive diagnosis of where Qi has become blocked or imbalanced. After the interview process, you may receive an acupuncture treatment. Visits with your acupuncturist may last from 30 to 90 minutes.

Why do they want to feel my pulse?

There are 12 pulse positions on each of your wrists that your acupuncturist will palpitate. Each position corresponds to a specific meridian and organ. Your acupuncturist will be looking for 27 individual qualities that reflect overall health. If there are any problems, they may appear in the pulse.

Why do they want to look at my tongue?

The tongue is a map of the body. It reflects the general health of organs and meridians. Your acupuncturist will look at the color, shape, cracks and coating on your tongue.

How many treatments will I need?

The number of treatments will vary from person to person. Some people experience immediate relief; others may take months or even years to achieve results. Chronic conditions usually take longer to resolve than acute ones. Plan on a minimum of a month to see significant changes.

Treatment frequently depends on a variety of factors: your constitution, the severity and duration of the problem and the quality and quantity of your Qi. An acupuncturist may suggest one or two treatments per week, monthly visits for health maintenance or seasonal "tune ups."

What should I expect during treatment?

Where the acupuncture needle has been inserted, you may experience vague numbness, heaviness, tingling or dull ache. Sometimes people experience a sensation of energy spreading and moving around the needle. This is called the "Qi sensation." All these reactions are good and a sign that treatment is working. After treatment, you may feel energized or may experience a deep sense of relaxation and well-being.

How should I prepare?

Come with any questions you have—we're here to help you.

–Wear loose, comfortable clothing for easy access to acupuncture points.

–Don't eat large meals just before or after your visit.

–Avoid stressful situations. Make time to relax and get plenty of rest.

–Between visits, take notes of any changes that may have occurred, such as the alleviation of pain, pain moving to other areas, or changes in the frequency and type of problems.

Do the needles hurt?

The sensation caused by an acupuncture needle varies. Some people feel a little pain as the needles are inserted, but most people feel no pain at all. The needles are tiny, just a little larger than a cat's whisker or human hair.

How deep do they go?

The depth of the insertion varies. For example, your acupuncturist will use a needling technique that is different in fleshier areas, such as your buttocks. Typically, needles are inserted at depths ranging from 1/8" to 1 1/2".

How safe is acupuncture?

Acupuncture is extremely safe. It is an all-natural, drug-free therapy, yielding no side effects except for feelings of relaxation and well-being. There is little danger of infection from acupuncture needles because they are sterile, used once, and then discarded.

Is acupuncture safe for children?

Yes! In some instances children actually respond more quickly than adults. If your child has an aversion to needles, your acupuncturist may massage the acupuncture points. This is called acupressure or tuina.

What type of schooling do acupuncturists get?

Today, acupuncturists receive 3 to 5 years of extensive and comprehensive graduate training at nationally certified schools. All acupuncturists must pass a national exam and meet strict guidelines to practice in every state.