

# Wedmore Physiotherapy

## Information for Patients

### Acupuncture

#### What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture is one of a number of treatments which may be offered to treat pain.

Acupuncture has been used in China for more than 3000 years.

Current research is supporting the effectiveness of acupuncture, in the treatment of pain. It has been shown that acupuncture can stimulate the brain to produce natural pain relieving and anti-inflammatory substances. These give pain relief and help the body to heal itself.

Acupuncture can be effective in the treatment of low back pain, neck pain, knee osteoarthritis and overuse injuries. Acupuncture combined with other forms of physiotherapy such as manual therapy and exercises can be very effective.

#### What does Acupuncture involve?

Treatment consists of the insertion of fine needles. These are pre-sterilised, single use ensuring strict hygiene practice.

The needle insertion will feel like a mild pinprick and should only give temporary discomfort.

Once the needles are in place you may feel a mild ache, numbness, warm or heavy sensation by and around the needle. This should not be unpleasant, but the sensation is important as it stimulates the body's inbuilt pain relieving mechanisms. The needles will gently be turned to continue the stimulation.

Most commonly a treatment will involve the insertion of 2-16 needles.

To be effective the needles need to be inserted for 20-30 minutes.

It is advisable to eat before having acupuncture, and not to attend if you are suffering from a severe cold or flu.

#### Is Acupuncture safe?

Chartered Physiotherapists are fully trained in the diagnosis and management of a wide range of conditions. To practice acupuncture Karen Larsen has undertaken post graduate training and qualified for full membership of the Acupuncture Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in 2001. To maintain

membership of this association as well as registration with the Health Professions Council ongoing post graduate is a requirement.

Acupuncture is safer than many of the drug treatments used. However, any procedure that involves inserting needles into the body has some potential risks, but these remain minimal. Acupuncture has been known to produce some “side effects” in certain people.

**Minor side effects:**

- Some needle discomfort
- Drowsiness and sleepiness following treatment
- Bruising at the needle site
- Temporary increase in pain
- Feeling faint
- Fainting

**Serious side effects (these are very rare)**

- Damage to an internal organ from the insertion of a needle
- Infection in the area where the needle was inserted
- Infection from Hepatitis or HIV
- Infection which may infect previously damaged heart valves
- Premature onset of labour

**When should Acupuncture not be used?**

- If you have needle phobia
- If you have a known metal allergy, special needles may possibly be used
- If you have a known infection in the area to be treated

**When should Acupuncture be used with caution?**

- If you suffer from haemophilia
- If you are pregnant or trying to conceive
- If you suffer from epilepsy
- If you have a deficient/weakened immune system
- If you have a heart pacemaker
- If you are taking anticoagulant (blood thinning) medication
- If you suffer from diabetes