
NATURAL MEDICINE OF VERMONT, P.C.

ACUPUNCTURE AND CHINESE MEDICINE

Welcome! This handout has been designed for the purpose of providing you, as a first time patient to acupuncture, on what to expect and an introduction to the history, philosophy and practice of acupuncture and Oriental medicine.

HISTORY OF CHINESE MEDICINE

Traditional Chinese medicine is a sophisticated approach to healing, developed over a period of at least 3,000 years, and is based on ancient Chinese medical texts which laid its foundation. Treatment in Chinese medicine is centered on the individual rather than the disease. The Oriental medicine practitioner pieces together your individual signs and symptoms, and synthesizes them into a clinical picture of you as a whole person. In traditional Chinese medicine the mental, emotional and physical are closely related, thus taking the entire person into account, both in diagnosis and treatment. Disease is typically viewed as disorder or disharmony, and treatment is directed toward balancing and harmonizing. Diagnosis is made through visual inspection, interview, and inspection of the tongue and palpation of the pulse in both wrists, at local areas of tenderness and at specific acupuncture points. Once a working diagnosis has been decided upon, a plan of treatment is formulated by the practitioner.

ACUPUNCTURE

Acupuncture is a traditional Chinese medical therapy using very fine, thin stainless steel needles to stimulate/treat specific points and organ systems. Acupuncture points have been “mapped” out by the Chinese for about 2,000 years. This treatment is used to promote health and treat organic or functional disorders. According to the World Health Organization, many common acute and chronic health disorders lend themselves to acupuncture treatment based on clinical experience such as:

- Ear, nose and throat
- Respiratory disorders
- Gastrointestinal disorders
- Eye disorders
- Neurological and muscular complaints
- Gynecological disorders
- Any type of local pain, strain or sprain
- Aid in stopping smoking or other addictions

Here at the Natural Medicine of Vermont we provide other types of Chinese therapies:

- Cupping: warmed “cups” that slide across the skin
- Earballs: tiny metal balls that are taped to acupuncture points in the ear
- Chinese herbal medicines

A single acupuncture appointment may include any combination of these methods as part of the patient’s treatment.

WHAT IS “QI”?

In Chinese qi (pronounced “chee”) translates to mean vital energy and is considered to flow through channels called Meridians that traverse the body in a manner similar but not identical to the nervous and circulatory systems. Acupuncture can regulate the flow of energy by moving it away from areas that have too much to create a balance by moving to areas that are deficient for the patient.

WHAT WILL I FEEL?

Acupuncture is considered to be relatively painless, however, with correct stimulation the movement of qi for a patient may cause a sensation that has been variously described as heaviness, distention, tingling or electric. This sensation may only be at the location of the needle or may travel up or down the meridian (energy pathway) that is being affected. This sensation is what the acupuncturist wants to happen for the patient as it is a sign that the patient’s qi is adjusting towards balance.

ARE THE NEEDLES CLEAN?

All needles used in this clinic are disposable. This means that only sterile needles are used on a patient, one time only. Once used, they are discarded appropriately as indicated by law.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AT AN ACUPUNCTURE APPOINTMENT?

Case taking includes a detailed history and present concerns. Additional questions may be asked that seem unusual but are quite essential for a Chinese diagnosis and treatment. A few examples of usual questions might be:

- Do you perspire? Where?
- Do you wake to urinate? What time?
- Are you warm or cold-blooded?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your sexual energy? Is this an increase or decrease?
- Does your stool float or sink?

Exam will include taking your pulse at both wrists and inspection of your tongue. The information gathered will allow the clinician to develop a personalized treatment plan for you.

The treatment tends to be very relaxing and you will be able to unwind and rest for 20 or more minutes after the needles have been inserted. During any point during the appointment any questions or concerns you have will be addressed. We are working in partnership to create optimal health and balance.