

# ACU CENTRE

## PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

*Please read this information carefully and ask the practitioner if there is anything you would like clarified.*

### **What is acupuncture?**

Acupuncture, a component of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), is a form of therapy in which fine needles are inserted into specific points on the body. A smouldering herb called 'moxa' may be used to warm these points. Associated therapeutic modalities include cups, spoons, dermal hammer, electroacupuncture, laser, TCM massage, mobilisation, acupressure and Chinese herbs and medicinals.

### **Is acupuncture safe?**

Acupuncture is generally very safe. Significant side effects are very rare - less than one per 10,000 treatments<sup>1</sup>. These are even more rare when acupuncture is carried out by properly trained traditional acupuncturists.

### **Does acupuncture have side effects?**

You should be aware that:

- drowsiness (or vague 'floatiness') occurs after treatment in a small number of patients<sup>1</sup>. If affected, you are advised not to drive immediately following a treatment, or drive with considerable extra care;
- minor bleeding or bruising occurs after acupuncture in about 3% of treatments<sup>1</sup>;
- some pain during treatment occurs in about 1% of treatments<sup>1</sup>. Words that are typically used to describe the acupuncture (qi) sensation include numbness, tingling, dull ache, heat, heaviness, and distension. A sudden surge may occasionally be felt upon needle insertion. If there is a sharp noxious pain the practitioner should be informed immediately. Note that there must be a qi sensation felt by the patient for the treatment to be effective.
- existing symptoms can sometimes get worse in the 24 hours or so after a treatment (less than 3% of patients)<sup>1</sup>. You should tell the practitioner about this, but it is usually a good sign;
- fainting can occur in some patients, particularly at the first treatment<sup>1</sup>. Treatment carried out with the patient lying down obviates against this occurrence.

<sup>1</sup> **Acupuncture in Medicine** (2001) December Vol. 19(2) 129.

*Only Single-use, pre-sterilised, disposable needles are used in this clinic.*

**Is there particular information your practitioner should know?**

Apart from your medical details, it is important that you let your practitioner know if you:

- have experienced a fit, faint or funny turn in recent days/ weeks/ months, or any other particularly unusual event;
- have in place a pacemaker or any other electrical implants;
- have a bleeding disorder;
- are taking anti-coagulants or any related medication;
- have damaged heart valves;
- are at particular risk of infection (e.g. suffer from diabetes).

In addition, if you believe there are particular risks or circumstances that apply in your case, you should discuss these with your practitioner.

**What can you do to facilitate successful treatment?**

- arrive in good time for your appointment as this will allow your pulse and other bodily systems to settle and normalise to your typical pattern;
- keep recently ingested food and drink to small amounts. It is good to be neither too full nor hungry or thirsty. For several hours before treatment avoid alcohol completely, and caffeine intake should be minimised;
- don't clean your tongue as this will obscure an important diagnostic tool;
- interact (as required/necessary) with the practitioner during treatment. Appropriate feedback can be very useful in guiding the direction of a therapeutic session;
- be sure to offer all relevant information. Even obscure and apparently unrelated information can be useful, (sometimes strange things fit neatly within the TCM purview). Use your own words when describing feelings and sensations.
- relax, lie still, and be in the moment.
- try to comply with the therapeutic advice offered.