

What is acupuncture?

For centuries, Acupuncture has been used as a Chinese therapy. It is based on the theory that there is energy, called chi or qi, flowing through your body. Chi is thought to flow along energy pathways called meridians. Acupuncturists believe a blocking or imbalance of the flow of chi at any point on a pathway may result in illness. Chinese medicine practitioners believe acupuncture unblocks and rebalances the flow of chi to restore health.



The use of acupuncture is often used among people to relieve pain, believed among some Western medical researchers who have studied acupuncture. They presume that it may reduce pain through body chemicals that have calming effects (opioid peptides). Or it may reduce pain by affecting glands (such as the hypothalamus) that produce substances (hormones) that regulate the body.

Chinese acupuncture usually is done by putting very thin needles into the skin at certain points on the body. This is done to influence energy flow along the body's meridians. Other types of acupuncture may use heat, pressure, or mild electrical current to stimulate energy flow along these meridians.

What is acupuncture used for?

People use acupuncture to relieve pain and treat certain health conditions. You can use it by itself or as part of a treatment program. Studies have found promising results for the use of acupuncture in treating nausea and vomiting related to pregnancy, chemotherapy, and post-surgery pain. Acupuncture also may be useful for:

- Stroke rehabilitation, which involves relearning skills that a person lost because of brain damage from a stroke.
- Headache- A study shows that adding acupuncture to standard treatment leads to significant, long-lasting relief from chronic headaches, especially migraines.
- Menstrual cramps
- Tennis elbow
- Fibromyalgia, or widespread pain and tenderness of muscle and soft tissue.
- Myofascial pain, caused by spasm in the muscles.
- Osteoarthritis or the breakdown of the tissue cartilage that protects and cushions joints. A study found that acupuncture can reduce knee pain and increase movement of the knee in people with osteoarthritis.
- Low back pain
- Carpal tunnel syndrome or pressure on a nerve in the wrist that results in tingling, numbness, weakness, or pain of the fingers and hand.
- Asthma, or inflammation in the tubes that carry air to the lungs, resulting in periodic episodes of difficulty breathing, wheezing, chest tightness, and coughing.
- Drug addiction. Acupuncture may help reduce symptoms of withdrawal after a person stops taking a drug he or she is addicted to. It may also help prevent a relapse. More studies are needed to learn about the benefits of acupuncture.
- Dental pain
- Labor pain

- Infertility, sleep disorders, eating disorders and depression

For further information regarding treatment and consultation:

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