

Acupuncture

Acupuncture is the insertion of very fine needles into specific points of your body, depending on where your pain is.

How does it work?

It is not fully understood how acupuncture works but the Western theory is that it works by blocking the pain pathways to the brain and releasing the body's own painkiller - endorphins - and relaxing muscle spasms.

The course

This comprises of four weekly sessions, with an assessment after the third one, to see if the treatment is working for you.

An assessment of the benefits you are experiencing will determine if treatment is continued. If you need further acupuncture, it will be every six to eight weeks.

What to expect

We do not expect acupuncture to get rid of your pain altogether but hopefully it will take the edge off your pain, improve movement and possibly improve sleep.

Needles will be in place for about 15 minutes, so it is important that you are comfortable.

There may be some discomfort when the needles are inserted but once in place, they should not be painful and you need to inform staff if they are.

From time to time, you will experience a small spot of blood or bruise where the needle has been inserted, especially if you are on blood thinning medication.



Side effects

There are no long-term side effects from acupuncture but some people may feel:

- Sleepiness (caution if driving)
- Faint (making sure you have eaten can help prevent this)
- Flushed
- Increased pain for a few hours/days after treatment.

In addition, some patients may react to the needles, as these contain Nickel and Cobalt. We may not be able to continue with the treatment, if a patient develops an allergy.

Please inform staff:

- You are on antibiotics
- You think you may be pregnant
- You are taking medication that thins the blood, eg Aspirin, Apixaban, Clopidogrel, Dipyridamole, Prasugrel, Rivaroxaban and Warfarin.
- You have had a recent viral infection (cold/flu)
- You have any rashes or broken skin.

Please do not hesitate to ask a member of the pain team if you have any questions.

For further information, contact the Pain Management Unit at Montagu Hospital. **Tel: 01709 649040.**

Patient Experience Team

The team are available to help with any concerns/complaints you may have about your experience at the Trust. Their office is in the Main Foyer (Gate 4) of Doncaster Royal Infirmary. Contact can be made either in person, by telephone or email.

The contact details are:

Telephone: 01302 553140 or 0800 028 8059

Email: pals.dbh@dbh.nhs.uk.

