

Welcome to Five Element Acupuncture and Chinese Herbal Medicine

It is an honor to serve people with this medicine. I am committed to being the best practitioner that I can be. The following are answers to frequently asked questions about acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine.

What conditions does acupuncture most effectively treat?

The World Health Organization and the National Institutes of Health endorse acupuncture as beneficial for many conditions.

- Pain
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- PMS & other Menstrual Disorders
- Headaches
- Depression
- Hypertension
- Digestive Complaints
- Fibromyalgia
- Anxiety
- Respiratory Illness

The medical effectiveness of acupuncture has gained considerable attention and respect in western countries over the past 25 years. Ongoing research is continually verifying the effectiveness of this Ancient Eastern Healing Art in treating Modern Western Diseases.

What will the initial visit be like?

During your first visit, you will have the opportunity to tell me what you would like to address with acupuncture and/or Chinese herbs. Many times just telling your story will help both of us understand you better. Also, a complete medical history will be taken as well as a short physical exam. The initial diagnostic session and treatment will require approximately two hours. Occasionally, we will have time for a short treatment during the first visit, but more commonly we begin to use needles with the second visit.

And the following visits?

Each session lasts approximately 50 minutes. An hour time slot is set aside for you. If needed, an hour and a half appointment is available as well. The session begins with you talking about yourself for the first 10 to 15 minutes. You may report how you felt after the last treatment, give an update of any particular pain or discomfort that you have been feeling or talk about what is most important in your life at the moment. Treatment with needles follows the talking portion of the session. Treatment strategies are custom tailored for each person. Therefore, regardless of similarities in symptoms, no two individuals receive the same treatment. Five Element Acupuncture provides an in-depth, personal system of medicine, which recognizes a person's unique body, mind and spirit.

Do the needles hurt?

Only sterile disposable needles are used. Acupuncture needles are very fine, about the diameter of a human hair. Most people find that the needles are virtually painless. Generally, needles are inserted superficially—about 1/4th of an inch. Once the needle is inserted, a person may feel an ache, a swirling sensation, a warmth, or a sensation of energy opening along a pathway.

What is moxa?

Moxa is a dried plant (*artemisia latiflora*) that has been used as a complement to acupuncture needles for centuries. Moxa is soft, spongy fluff which is formed into small cones or tiny pieces and burned over acupuncture points. An ointment is placed on the skin before the small piece of moxa is placed and then lit with a small stick of incense. The moxa extinguishes or is removed before a person feels too much heat. Generally moxa is considered nourishing, tonifying and warming. Sometimes moxa is placed on the end of a needle to warm and release an area of pain.

How often do I need to be treated?

People usually come for treatment once a week for six to ten weeks. In acute conditions treatment may be required more than once a week. After the initial phase of treatment, a person moves to being treated every two weeks. Once a person's energy stabilizes, they come every three to four weeks. Some people find that acupuncture assists them in maintaining a healthy lifestyle so that they continue to come regularly. What works best for you is the determining factor in frequency of treatment. Optimally, a person in good health will choose to come seasonally, as a tune up.

What do I do on the day of treatment?

It is a good idea to avoid alcohol, excessive coffee, strenuous exercise or heavy meals on the day of treatment. You should continue to take medication that has been prescribed by your physician. Plan your activities in order that after a treatment you can take time to let your body gain the maximum benefit. It is best to have some quiet time after a treatment, if possible.

What about herbs?

Chinese herbs can be very helpful and tend to complement acupuncture treatments. Herbs are a daily reminder that you are caring for your health and well-being. They empower you to continue the treatment that the needles began.

Chinese herbal medicine (as well as acupuncture) is a sophisticated, ancient form of treatment. In Chinese herbalism, individual herbs are combined into a formula much the same way a group of people join to accomplish a task (like the carpenter, brick-layer, electrician, plumber and roofer all working together to build a house).

How are the herbs taken?

Herbs are dispensed in many forms. The most effective form is a decoction of "raw" herbs. An herbal pharmacy prepares a mixture of dried herbs that are roots, berries, twigs,

flowers and sometimes minerals. The client cooks the herbs in water to make a tea or decoction. This tea is taken usually two times a day and the excess is refrigerated for up to two weeks. A typical formula lasts seven to ten days.

If a client prefers to not cook the raw herbs, a tincture can be purchased. A tincture is raw herbs cooked into a very concentrated form with alcohol added to preserve the solution. Either an individualized formula is prepared by a pharmacy or I mix a tincture from herbal formulas kept in stock.

If neither the raw herbs nor a tincture is appealing, herbs can be made into either a powder or pills. The powder is actually the concentrated decoction with the water removed. The pills are the dehydrated powder put into capsule form or made into tablets.