



Acupuncture
Incorporating Eastern Medicine into Western Practices

By Nhu Nguyen
The Care Group, P.C.

While the Chinese and other eastern cultures have been using acupuncture for thousands of years, it has only been in recent decades that Western medical practitioners have begun to integrate this ancient healing art into their practices. At The Care Group, we use acupuncture to treat a variety of symptoms and conditions:

- Problems with digestion and reproductive systems
- Headaches
- Allergies and asthma
- Cold symptoms and sinus infections
- Hormone imbalance
- Issues relating to menopause, PMS and menstrual cramps

Many acupuncture patients also report an increased ability to relax, improved sleep patterns, and an enhanced sense of well-being.

How does acupuncture work?

Just how acupuncture works seems puzzling. The Eastern tradition believes an invisible force flows through pathways, called meridians, inside the human body. This force is called qi, or “chee.” When it is blocked, bodies become imbalanced. Acupuncture, in its various forms, acts on 365 points along these qi meridians, releasing the blocked energy and rebalancing a body's system. Non-Eastern interpretations of just what happens are a little different, but the similarities are evident. Western acupuncture practitioners see the points as spots where nerves, muscles and connective tissues can be stimulated to increase blood flow and release natural painkillers.

The World Health Organization lists 28 different conditions for which acupuncture is an effective treatment, and a number of studies suggest it provides therapeutic benefits for conditions as well. All branches of the U.S. military use acupuncture to treat a range of pain-related symptoms, including injuries on the battlefield. Acupuncture also is widely used to treat addictive behavior associated with smoking, alcohol, drug use and overeating.

The WHO list

The World Health Organization has created a list of medical issues that can be treated with acupuncture. It includes:

- **Ear, Nose and Throat Disorders** – Toothaches, earaches, sinusitis, rhinitis, laryngitis.
- **Respiratory Disorders** – Colds, bronchitis, asthma, allergies, emphysema.
- **Gastrointestinal Disorders** – Food allergies, nausea, indigestion, diarrhea, constipation, ulcers, colitis, IBS.
- **Urogenital Disorders** – Cystitis, stress incontinence, neurogenic bladder, prostatitis, prostatic hypertrophy.
- **Circulatory Disorders** – Hypertension, high cholesterol, arteriosclerosis, angina pectoris.
- **Gynecological Disorders** – Menstrual irregularity, endometriosis, PMS, infertility, menopausal syndrome, menstrual cramps.
- **Musculoskeletal Disorders** – Tennis elbow, frozen shoulder, TMJ, sciatica, low back pain, arthritis, carpal tunnel syndrome, fibromyalgia.
- **Psychoemotional and Neurologic Disorders** – Depression, anxiety, insomnia, headache, migraine, trigeminal neuralgia, post-stroke paralysis, dizziness, tinnitus.

More and more medical studies show positive results from acupuncture treatments for a variety of symptoms. Cancer patients, for example, report relief from severe dry mouth symptoms resulting from radiation treatment for head and neck cancer. It is also effective in alleviating the nausea and fatigue caused by chemotherapy. The Wallstreet Journal did an interesting article on March 22, 2010, about the increased use of acupuncture and its benefits in the United States: [Decoding Ancient Therapy](#).

Our patients like acupuncture

Feedback from The Care Group patients that have received acupuncture speaks for itself. Here are just a few stories:

- After accountant Unetta Borbone spent long days in front of a computer, she began experiencing persistent pain in both shoulders. Rearranging her workstation didn't eliminate the problem. When she visited The Care Group, she said she "was very open to the idea" of acupuncture.

After two sessions, Borbone said she felt much better. "I got immediate relief from the first session," she said. "After the second session, I would say I was experiencing 95-percent relief."

Friends often ask Borbone if the sessions are painful. "It doesn't hurt, even when the needles are being removed," she said, adding that she "definitely would recommend other people explore acupuncture as a treatment option. I can't believe I am feeling this good."

- Marilyn Schadt of Aurora had been experiencing aches, joint pains, and difficulty moving one of her shoulders, so acupuncture was suggested. After five sessions, she said, "The pain in the joints has eased quite a bit. Some joints no longer have any pain. With something that is degenerative like arthritis, it isn't necessarily going to go totally away. But it certainly has improved." She also reported decreased discomfort, additional range of motion and a drop in blood pressure since undergoing the acupuncture treatments.

- When Avon Carey mentioned problems with lower back pain while undergoing treatment at The Care Group for fibromyalgia, acupuncture was suggested. The treatment was "very helpful," she said. "I don't have that particular pain anymore."

A variety of reasons for using acupuncture

There are a variety of reasons why patients seek acupuncture treatments. Sometimes it's the treatment of last resort, but more likely its because patients have experienced or heard of others having positive results from acupuncture treatments. Some patients are concerned about pain caused by the needles, but the needle insertion really isn't painful, because the needles are so thin.

While the reasons for seeking acupuncture treatments vary, acupuncture is consistently known for alleviating a symptom and allowing the body to heal itself naturally. Quite often acupuncture works well in conjunction with other types of therapy, and many insurance plans do cover the treatments.

"We use a wide range of effective treatment modalities at The Care Group as we treat the whole patient," says Dr. Gerard Guillory, M.D., President of The Care Group.

"Acupuncture is one of those tools. The more tools we have, the better we can treat the patient."

Nhu Nguyen is a second-generation licensed acupuncturist and traditional Chinese herbalist who trained at the Colorado School of Traditional Chinese Medicine for three years. She also received more than five years of specialist training under renowned acupuncturists. She has several years experience with Western medicine and is working toward a degree as a Physician's Assistant.