



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What can I expect during my first appointment?**

During your first appointment your health history, lab records and recommendations from your primary care physician and specialists will be reviewed. An integration of modern and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) diagnostic tools will also be utilized to provide a more complete picture of your constitution. These may include physical assessments such as range of motion and blood pressure along with TCM pulse and tongue examination. With this information and your insight, a personalized treatment plan will be developed that can best support you in meeting your health goals. After the intake period, an initial treatment session utilizing acupuncture, gua sha, cupping or massage may also be included.

### **What is acupuncture and how does it aid in healing?**

Acupuncture is a therapeutic practice that involves the insertion of fine needles into specific acupuncture points or acupoints in the body with physical or electrical stimulation. Each of the acupoints lie along nerve pathways called meridians through which energy or qi flows to nourish the mind, body and spirit. According to TCM theory, dis-ease occurs when the flow of qi becomes blocked or imbalanced. Inserting needles at specific points along these meridians functions to open areas of stagnant energy and restore balance. Modern Biomedical research has revealed that each of these acupoints contains a higher proportion of nerve fibers compared to other areas of the body. When these nerve-rich acupoints are stimulated with the insertion of a needle, the Central Nervous System releases a cascade of beneficial substances including endorphins, immune system cells, opioids, neurotransmitters and neurohormones. This results in increased blood flow, decreased pain or how the body perceives pain, improved immune function and an increased sense of calm and wellbeing.

### **What type of acupuncture needles are used and what experience can I expect during treatment?**

Acupuncture needles are sterile, filiform and single use, being disposed of safely after one insertion and removal. The needles are very small in diameter and produce little or no sensation upon insertion. Once the needles are placed, patients often report a sense of relaxation or of being gently energized as the needles increase circulation and release your body's own calming and healing neurochemicals.

### **What conditions can acupuncture treat?**

Due to its ability to awaken the innate healing mechanisms within each individual, acupuncture has been shown to benefit the nervous, endocrine, immune, cardiovascular and digestive systems. According to the World Health Organization, the following common conditions have been treated effectively with acupuncture: back and neck pain, headaches, arthritis, tendonitis, frozen shoulder, post-operative pain, asthma, allergies, anxiety, depression, insomnia, common colds, flu, constipation, diarrhea, IBS, colitis, High Blood Pressure, Bell's Palsy, Shingles, Stroke, autoimmune conditions, menstrual irregularities, PCOS, side effects of Chemotherapy and Radiation, addictions and weight management.

### **How many acupuncture treatments are necessary to facilitate a change in my health?**

Most patients report an improvement in their condition after one session, but a longer treatment course is typically indicated to support lasting change. In general, the more chronic a complaint the more treatments required and conversely, the more acute a complaint the fewer treatments required. On average, most patients report lasting change after 6–8 acupuncture sessions, spaced at 1-week intervals.

### **What is Gua Sha?**

Gua sha is a therapeutic treatment in which an instrument, traditionally a piece of smooth jade, is rubbed across an area of the body to intentionally increase local blood flow and remove areas of stiffness or stagnation. This therapy often results in transitory petechiae or 'sha' on the skin surface which typically resolves in 3–5 days. The physiological effects of this therapy are increased circulation, reduced inflammation and improved immune function. As a result, gua sha has been shown effective at improving musculoskeletal issues including neck and back pain, migraines and postherpetic neuralgia. Immune related conditions including fever, cough asthma, bronchitis and emphysema have also shown improvement with gua sha as have inflammatory diseases including gastritis, hepatitis and mastitis.

### **What is Cupping?**

Cupping therapy, like gua sha, is an ancient tool in Chinese Medicine which traditionally involves glass cups being heated and then placed quickly and strategically upon the skin to create negative pressure, or suction. Cups can be left in place or can be moved upon lubricated skin and provide a sensation of lifting, separating or creating space in the tissues. Some patients describe the sensation as a "reverse massage". In Western Science this mechanism is known as Myofascial Decompression and results in increased circulation, increased range of motion, and decreased pain and inflammation.

### **Why might I benefit from herbal and whole food nutrient supplementation?**

In our fast - paced world many patients suffer from nutrient deficiencies due to high stress levels, and a poor diet. In addition, pharmaceuticals and over the counter medications are known to disrupt beneficial intestinal flora and to deplete nutrients essential for life including B vitamins, magnesium and CoQ10. Chemical toxins in water, food, air and in personal or home care products can further cause disease by dysregulating hormone function and increasing inflammation. Implementing whole food based nutrient supplements and an herbal protocol designed specifically for you can help replace missing nutrients and support your innate processes of detoxification, hormone regulation, cellular repair, and restoration. This can result in a greater sense of calm and mental clarity, reduced pain and inflammation and improved digestion and organ function.

### **What level of training is required by Licensed Acupuncturists in California?**

In California, Licensed Acupuncturists are required to obtain a Doctorate in Traditional Chinese Medicine. This involves 4–5 years of full-time graduate level studies including extensive training in acupuncture, herbal medicine and nutrition along with studies in allopathic medicine including anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology, pharmacology, physical exam, laboratory analysis and 4 years of clinical residency. Upon graduation from an accredited Doctoral Program, candidates must pass a rigorous Licensing Exam to receive board certification in order to practice as a licensed acupuncturist (L.Ac.) in California. A Licensed Acupuncturist is further required to complete ongoing Continuing Education courses every 2 years to maintain their licensure.

### **Where can I find more information and research on Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine?**

The body of high quality research studies supporting the efficacy of acupuncture continues to grow. To access a collection of peer-reviewed research studies go to:

<https://www.evidencebasedacupuncture.org>

For those that are less research minded you can explore patient friendly articles and tips here:

<http://www.acupuncture.com>

### **Have a question that wasn't answered here?**

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