

# PATIENT INFORMATION

## Acupuncture for Pain Relief

Physiotherapy Department

An integrated care organisation  
**What is Acupuncture?**

Acupuncture involves the insertion of very fine needles into certain points on the skin. The needles, which are sterile and single-use, penetrate the skin and/or muscle and are disposed of safely after each treatment.

## **How does it work?**

Modern scientific research has found that acupuncture can stimulate the relief of pain by nerve reflexes causing the brain to release the body's own natural painkillers, called endorphins. It can also help to modify the way in which impulses carrying pain travel to the brain.

## **Is Acupuncture an accepted physiotherapy treatment?**

Yes. Physiotherapy is the treatment and prevention of injury and disease by physical means. Physiotherapists have specific training in a wide range of treatment methods, which can be used alone or in combination. Acupuncture is just one of those methods.

## **Does it affect me as a Blood Donor?**

You can still be a blood donor if you have received acupuncture from a health care professional working within the NHS.

## **What can I expect?**

Your physiotherapist will make a thorough assessment of your problem and decide whether acupuncture is an appropriate treatment to offer to you.

If you choose to have acupuncture, your physiotherapist will ask you to sign a hospital consent form to allow acupuncture treatment.

After assessment, your physiotherapist will select certain acupuncture points which they feel are most appropriate for your condition. The area to be treated will be swabbed with an alcohol wipe and the needle or needles will be inserted, and left in place for 5 to 20 minutes, after which the needles will be removed and disposed of safely.

### **What will I feel?**

You will feel a slight pricking sensation as the needle is inserted. There are different types of acupuncture e.g. standard, electro-acupuncture, trigger point, and auricular acupuncture. All can feel different and your therapist will advise on what to expect.

Whilst the needles are in place you may feel a warmth or heaviness in the area treated and may feel sleepy and relaxed after treatment.

You may notice an effect immediately on your symptoms or there maybe a delayed response.

At each visit your response to treatment will be evaluated and further treatments will be planned as appropriate.

We aim to improve your condition within 3 to 6 treatments and consider this an optimum number of treatments for most conditions.

## Are there any side effects?

During treatment you may experience feelings of drowsiness and calm. You may still feel a little drowsy after your treatment and therefore should not drive until you have fully recovered.

You are advised not to attend acupuncture appointments on an empty stomach. Acupuncture can cause a slight drop in your blood sugar level and eating will help prevent any risk of fainting. You should eat one hour before treatment and within two hours after treatment.

Minor bleeding or bruising occurs after acupuncture in about 3% of patients

Pain during treatment occurs in about 1% of treatments. Existing symptoms can get worse temporarily after treatment. You should inform your physiotherapist if concerned.

## Are there any conditions where acupuncture may not be a suitable treatment option?

Possible contra- indications :

- Pregnancy
- Needle-phobia
- ***Allergy to metals***
- Diabetes
- Blood clotting disorders
- Anticoagulant therapy

## **Further Information**

If you would like further information about acupuncture please speak to your physiotherapist.

Physiotherapist:

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Tel:

.....

Should you require further help or advice please contact:

Joanna Capper  
Physiotherapy Department  
Southport District and General Hospital  
Southport  
01704 704150

**During your contact with us, it is important that you are happy with your care and treatment. Please speak to a member of staff and/or the ward/department Manager/Sister/Charge Nurse if you have any questions or concerns.**

## **REHABILITATION**

If you have any concerns or questions regarding your rehabilitation, please contact the Director of Rehabilitation, on tel no 01704 547471.

## **INFECTION CONTROL REQUEST**

Preventing infections is a crucial part of our patients' care. To ensure that our standards remain high our staff have regular infection prevention and control training and their practice is monitored in the workplace. We ask patients and visitors to assist us in preventing infections by cleaning their hands at regular intervals and informing staff of areas within the hospital that appear soiled.

As a patient there may be times that you are unsure whether a staff member has cleaned their hands; if in doubt please ask the staff member and they will be only too happy to put your mind at ease by cleaning their hands so that you can see them.

## **SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS**

### **ANY CONDITION SPECIFIC DANGER SIGNALS TO LOOK OUT FOR:**

### **CONTACT INFORMATION IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CONDITION**

Your own GP –

Joanna Capper, Physiotherapy Department, 01704 704150

### **OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS/CONTACTS:**

NHS 111

Stop Smoking Helpline (Sefton) - 0300 100 1000

Stop Smoking Helpline (West Lancashire) - 0800 328 6297

**Please call 01704 704714 if you need  
this leaflet in an alternative format**

**Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust**

Ormskirk & District General Hospital  
Wigan Road, Ormskirk, L39 2AZ  
Tel: (01695) 577111

Southport & Formby District General Hospital  
Town Lane, Kew, Southport, PR8 6PN  
Tel: (01704) 547471

**FOR APPOINTMENTS**

Telephone (01695) 656680  
Email [soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net](mailto:soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net)

Please remember to complete the **attached Friends and Family Test**.  
Alternatively, you can complete the *Friends and Family Test* on-line by going to: [southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/FFT](http://southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/FFT)  
**Thank you**

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