

Acupuncture of Iowa, Inc.
2412 Towncrest Dr.
Iowa City, IA 52240
319-341-0031



What to expect at your acupuncture treatment

Before your session, please do not come directly from a meal. Leave at least half an hour between eating and the time that the session begins. If you take medications, take your usual doses and let me know what you have taken that day.

At the first meeting, I will ask you to fill out a comprehensive questionnaire dealing with every area of your health. These are the questions normally asked in the process of making a Traditional Chinese Medicine diagnosis, whether for acupuncture or herbs. I will then interview you carefully about the things you have noted on your form and will take the time to answer all of your questions. It is important for you to feel comfortable with the acupuncture process and your relationship with me is critical to the effectiveness of your treatment and your progress during our work together.

I will do an examination of your pulses, your tongue and abdomen, and will palpate tender points and acupuncture points on your body. This will help confirm my diagnosis and give me more information about your health. I will make a preliminary diagnosis and a treatment plan, including a prescription of acupuncture points for you. Then, I will do a basic acupuncture treatment designed to open the flow of energy in the body and begin to treat your condition. It is an opportunity for you to see what acupuncture is like, and to see how you feel with me. It is also a time for me to see how you respond and to make note of any important things that you forgot to tell me, or of which you may not have been aware.

During the treatment you will lie on a table, like a massage table. The room is kept warm as most people get cool during the treatments while lying still. You will lie on your back for the first part, and then turn onto your stomach for points on the back. I will have you place your face in the face rest, if it is comfortable to do so. I can prop or block you if lying on the table is uncomfortable. I sometimes also treat people on their sides, or sitting up, if need be. We usually begin with needles in the ears to help you relax. I then will put needles into your feet and ankles, and often near your knees. The second area I use is the arms and wrists or hands. Lastly, I may place needles gently into or near an area of pain, if needed. There are points on every area of the body, but I try to avoid the very painful or sensitive areas. Needles are inserted from very shallow to very deep (in the case of the buttocks, for instance), and I pay attention to underlying anatomy to protect you from injury.

The needles are very slim, thinner than a sewing needle and very flexible and strong stainless steel. I use an insertion tube to insert the needles practically painlessly. Needles are removed from their packages just before use and then disposed of like any other medical waste. I am certified in clean needle technique by the American Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medical Schools, follow all of the acupuncture standards of care regarding blood-borne pathogens, and am myself vaccinated against Hepatitis B. I treat all people as if they are HIV positive, for their and my greatest safety. If a person knows that they are positive for the Hepatitis B or the AIDS virus, I appreciate being informed, though this is a voluntary choice.

When the needles are inserted, people sometimes feel a brief stick as they go through the skin. After this, the sensations are usually not painful. People often describe the sensation of acupuncture needles reaching the points in these ways: a feeling of numbness, dull ache, heaviness, distention, a zing, a tingle, an electrical sensation at the point or moving away from the point, a grab, or spasm. People find their own unique descriptions. I will ask what you feel in order to assess my effectiveness in delivering the treatment.

Sometimes as they are removed, the needles stimulate the points once more. When you feel pain, burning or stinging that lasts for more than a second, the needle usually needs to be moved slightly. When inserted into the correct location, the insertion should be practically painless for most of the points on the body.

You will lie on the table for a total of from thirty to sixty minutes. This will depend on the number and location of the points, and whether you just want to rest longer. I may leave the room while you rest. Many people have a clear sense of when they are done with the treatment, since they relax at first, and then become energized while resting. Some people also feel anxious and I am always nearby to remove the needles if it may become necessary.

Many people feel benefits of treatment immediately, while others may not notice a change for a day or two, or until after several treatments. This probably depends on one's sensitivity to acupuncture, the length and severity of the illness, and what other treatment are being used. Some people find that they feel like resting or napping after the treatment. Others feel energetic and clear immediately. All responses are normal, and reflect personal differences in energy balance.

I am familiar with people's issues of trauma and take this into consideration during acupuncture treatments. My counseling background also helps me understand some of the emotional or psychological issues that may relate to your condition. I may refer acupuncture clients to other therapists for counseling if needed.

I frequently refer clients to other practitioners for homeopathy, chiropractic care, nutrition, allopathic (traditional western scientific) medicine, physical therapy, craniosacral therapy, massage, and structural bodywork such as Rolfing. I may also offer you traditional Chinese herbal formulas or supplements indicated by Oriental medicine analysis of your problem. We can discuss this at your session. Herbs are powerful medicine and should not be self-administered without guidance of a professional trained in the field.

In China, a course of treatment with acupuncture usually is made up of daily or every-other day treatments, ten in a row, from 20 to 60 treatments. Acupuncture is very inexpensive there (by our standards) and this makes it possible for people to have lots of treatments close together. Acupuncture is subtle in its effect, and, like chiropractic, requires repeated treatments to establish the desired changes in your system. Therefore, for many problems, I suggest that people attend a session once per week for three to four weeks at least. We then reevaluate your progress and may go to bi-weekly visits. Together, we decide what is best for you. Many people come weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly for stress management, wellness, preventive care, or for maintenance care. In this way, acupuncture can be used like massage, as part of your wellness program.

I believe that you are the best expert on your health and health care needs. I expect that you take responsibility for your health. I will make recommendations, and it is your choice to follow them. You may find surprising things when you carefully monitor what makes you better and worse. Trust yourself and find health care providers that trust your assessment of yourself and want to work with you to establish optimal health. I will do everything I can to assist you in your pursuit of health and wellness.

I am always available to answer your questions, and though I don't often pick up the phone if I am with a client, I will listen to my messages frequently and return your call as soon as I am able. I have receptionists about half time. I can recommend other providers for other parts of your care, and will work closely with them to coordinate your treatment. I look forward to working with you if you choose to pursue this avenue of health care.