

Nightingale House Hospice

Patient information about acupuncture

The physiotherapists at Nightingale House are members of the Acupuncture Association of Chartered Physiotherapists (AACP). This ensures they have undergone a recognised course and regularly update their training. As Chartered Physiotherapists they are bound by a strict and ethical code of practise.

Each patient is assessed for suitability for acupuncture treatments, which may be combined with other forms of physiotherapy e.g. hydrotherapy

What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture is a form of therapy in which fine needles are inserted into specific parts of the body. Acupuncture points are located all over the body on lines of energy (meridians). The Chinese, in traditional medicine have been using acupuncture for over 2000 years.

Western acupuncture (used at Nightingale House) is used alongside western medicine as a form of pain relief and to treat other symptoms such as nausea and hot flushes. Research has shown that acupuncture stimulates the body to produce its own chemicals to relieve pain and other symptoms.

Single use disposable needles are used in the department. When the needles are inserted a sensation like a pin prick is sometimes felt. A deeper sensation may be felt which indicates effective stimulation at the acupuncture point.

Some patients may be unsuitable for invasive needling techniques, e.g. because of poor skin condition. In these cases the physiotherapists may choose to use an electro acupuncture instrument that does not pierce the skin or acupressure.

Is acupuncture safe?

Acupuncture is generally very safe. Serious side-effects are very rare, less than 1 per 10,000.

Does acupuncture have side effects?

You need to be aware that:

- Drowsiness occurs in a small number of patients and if affected, you are advised not to drive.
- Minor bleeding or bruising occurs after acupuncture in about 3% of treatments.
- Pain during treatment occurs in about 1% of treatments.
- Existing symptoms can get worse after treatment (less than 3% of patients). You should tell your acupuncturist about this, but it is usually a good sign.
- Fainting can occur in certain patients, particularly at the first treatment.

In addition, if there are any particular risks that apply in your case, your physiotherapist will discuss them with you.

The Physiotherapist will take a detailed assessment and ask you questions which may influence the type of acupuncture treatment we give you. If you think, in subsequent sessions, your answers to those questions have changed please let us know.

The Physiotherapist will discuss this information with you and ask you to sign a consent form before commencing acupuncture.