



## WHAT IS ACUPUNCTURE?

Acupuncture refers to the insertion of tiny, hair-thin needles into the skin at strategic points to ease pain and treat many illnesses. Practiced in China for more than 2,000 years, acupuncture is based on the belief that the body contains energy called qi (pronounced "chee") that flows throughout the body on pathways called meridians. When you're healthy, this energy flows freely, but during illness, the energy may be weak or blocked. During acupuncture treatment, the clinician tries to improve the energy flow along the meridians.

### How does it work?

The improved energy flow produced by acupuncture results in stimulation of the body's natural healing abilities. Acupuncture points are locations on the body that can be used to facilitate circulation of qi. There are approximately 365 identifiable acupuncture points, which are distributed along meridians. All the acupuncture points are referred to by their original Chinese name. The name indicates the function or the location of this specific acupuncture point.

Scientific research suggests that needling acupuncture points stimulates the body to release chemicals into the nervous system and into the bloodstream. These chemicals change the experience of pain and trigger the release of other substances that influence the body's internal regulatory systems. Acupuncture has proven successful in treating chronic pain conditions without side effects. It's also shown to be helpful in treating patients with:

- » postoperative surgery and dental pain
- » nausea and vomiting related to chemotherapy
- » sinusitis, bronchitis and asthma
- » gastritis, colitis, hiccups and constipation
- » abdominal pain
- » headaches
- » low back pain
- » neck pain
- » addiction
- » stroke rehabilitation
- » menstrual cramps
- » tennis elbow
- » fibromyalgia
- » myofascial pain
- » osteoarthritis
- » carpal tunnel syndrome

### What happens during acupuncture treatment?

During the acupuncture session, your child will lie on a padded table. The acupuncturist will insert very thin sterile and disposable stainless steel needles into key points on your child's body. Because the needles are solid, they don't hurt as much as regular hollow hypodermic needles. Most children feel only minimal pain or a tingling sensation as the needles are inserted, and some feel no pain at all. Once the needles are in place, no pain is felt and most children begin to feel comfortable and relaxed. Each treatment usually takes between 30 and 60 minutes.

### Does insurance cover medical acupuncture?

Despite the documented benefits of acupuncture therapy, some insurance companies do not yet recognize its value. Please discuss your individual needs with your medical acupuncturist.

## ABOUT US

The Medical Acupuncture Service is part of the Department of Anesthesiology, Critical Care and Pain Medicine at Boston Children's Hospital. Led by Yuan-Chi Lin, MD, MPH, and Cynthia Tung, MD, MPH, our doctors are fully licensed in Western medicine and also have thorough training in acupuncture as a specialty practice. The service provides care for children and young adults to help them manage a variety of acute and chronic pain as well as non-pain-related illnesses through acupuncture. We offer services through our inpatient facility at the Boston Children's Longwood Campus and our outpatient Medical Acupuncture Clinic at Boston Children's Waltham location. The majority of patients come weekly for 4 to 6 weeks.

### For inpatient appointments:

Boston Children's Hospital  
300 Longwood Avenue  
Boston, MA 02115  
617-355-4158

### For outpatient appointments:

Boston Children's at Waltham  
9 Hope Avenue  
Waltham, MA 02453  
781-216-3700