

Hello!

Welcome to Stafford Acupuncture! I am happy to have you here.

To make the most of our treatments together, I've compiled this letter to answer common questions or concerns you may have about treatments.

How does acupuncture work?

Acupuncture points are specific areas on the body just beyond the surface of the skin. They have high concentrations of nerve endings, mast cells, lymphatic vessels, and capillaries. When an acupuncture needle is inserted into an acupuncture point, it stimulates the sensory receptor, which in turn stimulates the nerve, which then transmits impulses to the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal system.

This complex system of interactions (often called a "feedback loop") between the brain, hormones, and glands is responsible for regulating a number of bodily processes. Because acupuncture helps to regulate the various feedback loops in your body, it actually allows your body to *heal itself* of whatever is wrong. This amazing trait is unique to nearly every other medical system, and has sustained acupuncture as a complete system of medicine for over 5,000 years.

How often should you schedule appointments in order to get the highest value out of your treatments?

Acupuncture works cumulatively, and it is very rare that one treatment is all you will need to feel better. It is essential to get treatments close to each other at first because each treatment gains momentum on the last. If treatments are too far apart, we can lose momentum and erase the progress we've done through treatments.

Each person responds differently to acupuncture, so we usually won't know exactly how many treatments you will need until we've gone through a few sessions. A typical treatment course for chronic conditions may be around 10-12 treatments in 6 weeks, and for acute conditions it may look like 6 treatments in 4 weeks.

Because each treatment builds on the last, I expect you to feel slowly yet progressively better with each treatment. It is also important to schedule a session immediately if you ever start to feel yourself "backsliding," and your next scheduled appointment isn't for a couple of days or longer.

Generally speaking, we will be able to space treatments further and further apart as long as you keep steadily improving with each treatment (and stay at that level between visits to the clinic). Maintenance sessions are often recommended every 4-6 weeks to keep your body in a healthy, joyful, and balanced state.

What to Wear:

Loose, comfortable clothing is always best for treatments, as it provides easy access to your knees and elbows, and it provides you an even greater chance for complete relaxation. Feel free to wear pajamas to your treatment, if those are what you feel comfortable in.

If you are unable to wear loose clothing, sheets and blankets are always available to cover up, should you need to remove constricting clothing for your treatment.

What to Expect:

Side effects of acupuncture are infrequent, but they can occur. They also tend to be very mild when (and if) they do occur. The most common side effects are explained below.

Fatigue

While most people notice a marked improvement in their symptoms following acupuncture, some feel worse before they start feeling better. This is sometimes referred to as a "healing crisis." Because acupuncture works to get you "unstuck," dormant physical issues can get stirred up in

the process. As these issues are brought to our awareness, we are able to address them in the clinic so they can be handled and healed appropriately.

It is also very possible to feel wiped out after acupuncture. Acupuncture is powerful, and when things are moving... your body gets tired. This is never a cause for concern, and the best thing to do is re-fuel with nourishing snacks, fresh water, and relaxation time.

Soreness

Body parts where acupuncture needles get inserted can feel sore after needles are removed. You also may experience muscle soreness away from the needling site if a trigger point was released during your treatment. Soreness from acupuncture typically dissipates within 24 hours. However, big trigger point releases can cause residual soreness that lasts a few days.

Bruising

Although less common than soreness, bruising can occur at the needling site. Bruises usually last slightly longer than soreness from an acupuncture needle. Still, they generally are not anything to worry about beyond the aesthetic inconvenience.

Emotional Release

It is very possible to cry during or after acupuncture. Along with the physical parts of you becoming "unstuck," emotions become free-flowing as well. The emotional release that can happen in acupuncture is often unexpected, but it is generally a very positive experience.

Feeling emotional during or after a treatment is a sign that the acupuncture is working in the emotional/mental department. Even if you're seeking acupuncture for a physical ailment, increased emotional expression is an indication that healing is happening. From an acupuncture perspective, physical and emotional health are interconnected, so emotional shifts suggest positive physical changes as well.

While these side effects are rarely cause for concern, you know your body best. If any of these side effects feel like they're too severe, too uncomfortable, or lasting too long—or if you notice any additional negative reactions to your acupuncture treatment—please let me know.

I know you have many options when it comes to your health, so thank you for choosing me as one of your healthcare practitioners.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns before the next time we see each other, please don't hesitate to contact me. I prefer email or text messages. I can usually get back right away with these modes of communication, while I only check voicemails and return calls once a day.

Sincerely,

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