

# Acupuncture: A Practical Guide

Acupuncture, rooted in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), views health as a state of **balance**. This equilibrium can be disrupted by various factors, including emotional states, genetic predispositions, injuries, dietary choices, and illnesses. When this balance is disturbed, it can impede the body's natural adaptability and the smooth flow of life.



At the core of TCM is **Qi (energy)**, which circulates throughout the body via specific pathways called **meridians**. If the flow of Qi becomes diminished or obstructed, this fundamental balance is upset, leading to both physical and emotional symptoms.

A TCM-trained acupuncturist takes a **holistic approach**, assessing your health concerns within the broader context of your life. This personalized perspective means treatments are tailored to your unique needs, focusing on you as an individual rather than just your symptoms.

During an appointment, acupuncturists gather information through a detailed consultation, pulse readings, and tongue observation. This comprehensive assessment allows them to develop a customized treatment plan. Fine, sterile, single-use disposable needles, adhering to strict NCCAOM standards, are then inserted at specific points along the meridians. This needling stimulates the flow of Qi and addresses any blockages. While there might be a momentary mild discomfort, such as a dull ache or tingling sensation, patients typically experience deep relaxation once the needles are in place, often falling asleep.

In addition to needling, ancillary treatments such as cupping therapy, moxibustion, electro-acupuncture, and ear acupuncture may also be incorporated into your treatment plan. Practitioners will always explain these procedures to you throughout the process.