

What should I expect on my first visit?

It is understandable and expected that you will have questions about your first visit. The following is provided to guide you through a typical intake and treatment. Please take a minute to read over the information and if you still have questions before, during or after your treatment, please do not hesitate to ask.

Paperwork

When you first get to the office you will be provided consent and intake forms to fill out. These forms can also be emailed to you or downloaded online. Please read over all the forms carefully and sign and date where appropriate. If you have any questions during the process, please do not hesitate to ask.

Intake

After you have filled out your paperwork, you will be escorted to a treatment room by a practitioner or a staff member. The intake will normally begin with the practitioner asking for a “chief complaint” or “primary complaint”. A chief or primary complaint is the main reason why you have come to seek treatment. You may have many different ailments which could seem unrelated, but often, when treatment is focused on the primary complaint, many secondary issues will improve as well.

Next, the practitioner will ask you many questions which may or may not seem related to your primary complaint. Please answer all questions as accurately and honestly as possible. It is very important for the practitioner to have as much detailed, accurate information as possible. Your diagnosis and treatment are dependent upon the details provided during the intake. During questioning, you may be asked to perform exercises to determine range of motion. The practitioner may also need to palpate the body in order to determine location of pain, acupuncture points etc.

Once initial questioning is complete, the patient will be asked to lay face-up on the treatment table or to sit in a chair. The practitioner will then palpate the patient’s radial pulse on both arms. After the pulse diagnosis is complete, the patient will be asked to extend their tongue and the practitioner will perform a visual inspection for diagnostic purposes (please do not brush your tongue before a treatment). At any time during the intake, please feel free to ask questions.

Treatment

After the intake, the practitioner will make a diagnosis and formulate the proper point prescription to address your concerns. The practitioner will then instruct you on the best position for you to lay or sit depending upon which acupuncture points will be used. Please wear or bring loose fitting, comfortable clothing to the treatment so that the practitioner can easily access acupuncture points. Shorts or sweat pants which can be pulled above the knee will be ideal. If an article of clothing needs to be removed (other than socks, shoes and jewelry), the practitioner will leave the room while the patient removes the article of clothing and drapes any exposed anatomy. The practitioner will employ ethical behavior at all time and will strive to ensure patients are comfortable by tastefully draping any areas that do not require access for treatment purposes.

Once the acupuncture points are accessible, the practitioner will swab his chosen points with alcohol to ensure the areas of needle insertion are clean. Next, the needles will be inserted by the practitioner into the selected points. The needles are very thin and often, the patient does not even realize that the needles have been inserted. Upon penetration of the needle, the patient may experience a slight pinch or electrical sensation followed by a tingling or heavy sensation at the site of needle insertion. It is not uncommon for the same acupuncture point to elicit a unique response when used on different individuals. If there is any persistent pain after needle insertion, the patient should notify the practitioner and the practitioner will either attempt to re-insert the needle or remove the needle entirely.

Once all of the needles are inserted, the patient will lay or sit still for up to one hour. On occasion, depending on the treatment strategy, the practitioner may instruct the patient to perform exercises with the needles retained. While lying down, it is not uncommon for patients to enter a relaxed state and drift off into sleep. This is normal.

When the proper time has elapsed, the practitioner will remove the needles. Upon removal of the needles, it is common from time to time to have a small speck of blood where a needle was removed. On areas of the body rich in veins and capillaries such as the hands and feet, it is very common. This is normal. The practitioner will use a cotton ball to press the area to remove any specks of blood. On areas prone to bruising, the practitioner will press a cotton ball to the area for a minute or more to stop or minimize bruising.

The acupuncturist will dispose of all needles into an approved sharps container. After disposal of the needles, the patient will be asked to slowly rise. If the patient has been asked to remove any article of clothing for purposes of treatment, the practitioner will exit the room while the patient undrapes themselves and proceeds to get dressed. Some patients may feel a bit groggy immediately after the treatment, but within a few minutes, the patient should be able to resume normal activities.

So, hopefully now you are more comfortable with what will occur during your treatment. If at any time before, during or after the course of treatment you should have concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to ask. Our goal is to ensure that you enjoy your treatment and achieve the desired results.