

# New Patient Information Packet

Welcome to the Acupuncture Department at Kaiser  
Permanente Redwood City Medical Center

We are located at:

1400 Veterans Blvd., Second Floor

Redwood City, CA 94063

Your Acupuncturist is:

Dr. Scott Whitfield L.Ac., D.A.O.M.

(650) 299-4735

<http://mydoctor.kaiserpermanente.org/ncal/provider/scottwhitfield>

Your Medical Assistant is:

Manjula Sahai

(650) 299-4735

**We look forward to serving you!**

## **Your Plan of Care**

**Acupuncture treatment received at a minimum frequency of 1-2 times per week, with no gaps longer than 1 week between any sessions. There will be 6 sessions total (on this referral) followed by a reassessment for medical necessity.**

**Current Therapeutic Goals: Reduce the level of symptoms by 50% and increase ability to function by 50% by the end of a course of 6 acupuncture sessions and achieve a lasting effect.**

**In the event that you elect to discontinue Acupuncture services prior to attaining the agreed upon therapeutic goals and treatment Plan of Care, you will be considered discharged to a self-management status. Additionally, you will be discharged from Acupuncture services if you are not seen for treatment within 14 days after the last visit.**

**At the conclusion of 6 acupuncture sessions, your case will be assessed by the acupuncturist and any recommendations will be noted in your medical record. Your personal physician will have access to this information and is responsible for deciding whether to continue acupuncture therapy or not.**

## **The Kaiser Permanente Model of Acupuncture Care**

**Acupuncture at Kaiser Permanente Northern California is not recommended as a stand-alone therapy but could be included in a multidisciplinary approach to your case.**

**Only short-courses of acupuncture for chronic benign pain of greater than 3 months duration -or- nausea/vomiting due to chemotherapy. Long-term or maintenance-style acupuncture is not offered to any patient.**

**Acupuncture is most effective as a part of a comprehensive program that includes active rehabilitation, psychological support, and lifestyle and diet modification. Therefore Physical Therapy, the Chronic Pain Program, Fibromyalgia Group, Headaches Group, KP.ORG patient resources, and classes through the Health Education department should be considered for use in conjunction with acupuncture treatment.**

**Acupuncture is a 'bridging strategy' to support successful implementation of an active rehabilitation program. Since acupuncture is not used as a long-term passive maintenance therapy, it is important for the attending physician to discuss the expectations of treatment outcomes and to encourage the patient to engage appropriate lifestyle changes. Self-care activities such as stretching, exercise, stress management, self-massage, and dietary changes will have the potential for long-term benefit.**

**For those members who do not meet the above inclusion criteria or who want stand-alone acupuncture treatment there is a 25% discount offered by American Specialty Health Network providers of acupuncture, chiropractic and massage. For more information go to [kp.org/choosehealthy](http://kp.org/choosehealthy) or call 1-877-335-2746.**

## Acupuncture Do's & Don'ts for Clinical Success

### PLEASE DO...

- Have a little something in your stomach during the treatment
- Avoid the use of alcohol, tobacco or caffeine on the day of your treatment
- Arrive 10-15 minutes early for your appointment and avoid rushing
- Urinate before your appointment and before you get into the treatment room
- Come with completed paperwork or be prepared to fill out paperwork
- Be prepared to be here for at least 1 hour, with you on the table for a MINIMUM of 30 minutes of needle retention time (the longer, the better outcome)
- Try to relax as much as possible during the treatment
- Turn off your cell phone during the treatment
- Consider doing a treatment frequency that allows you to avoid “backsliding” into pain. Weekly treatments are not always sufficient for a good outcome! It should be no less frequent than 1x/week but 2-3x/week will render a better clinical outcome
- Generally eat well and don't skip meals
- Practice proper hydration by drinking enough water
  - Shoot for drinking 1/2 your body weight in Oz. of room-temperature water per day
  - Additionally, drink an 8 Oz. glass of water for each caffeine or alcohol drink you consume (to break even from the diuretic effects of these beverages)
- Quit smoking cigarettes as soon as possible as they are working against your attempts to heal and putting you at risk for serious health complications
- Please call with 24-hours notice of cancellation or schedule change
- Think of realistic goals to set for the 6 sessions of acupuncture (I consider 50% improvement in pain level and/or 50% improvement in function level to be realistic)
- Pay close attention to:
  - If and/or how your pain changed (decreased or increased)
  - How long your pain changed
  - Whether the pain has moved, changed in quality or frequency
  - Whether you got no change, slight, medium, good or great relief or increased pain

### PLEASE DO NOT...

- Show up wearing fragrances, colognes, perfumes, essential oils, etc.
- Expect to multitask during your treatment
- Move body parts with needles in them
- Over-exert yourself (physically, mentally or emotionally) after the treatment
- Consume alcohol (or other toxic substances) on the day of your treatment
- Take movements, actions or engage in activities that will exacerbate your pain during the entire course of treatment
- Swim or bathe for 1 hour following the acupuncture treatment

## Ways of Delivering Acupuncture

by Dr. Scott Whitfield L.Ac., D.A.O.M.

Patients in my clinic are sometimes confused by the fact that my style of treatment often doesn't match that of acupuncturists they have seen previously. This is a natural response. I like to say, "There are as many ways to practice acupuncture as there are acupuncturists." One of my beloved (now deceased) professors of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Santa Cruz used to say, "There are many ways to get to San Francisco. You can take Highway 1... beautiful! You can take Highway 280 or you can take Highway 101. Just don't drive South!" To me, this was her recognition that practitioners will always have their own approach to medicine and so long as they adhered to the basic principles of the medicine, they could still achieve good results.

Here at Redwood City Kaiser Permanente, I find myself in an interesting position. I am expected to help chronic pain patients using only acupuncture tools in a short course of treatment. Many of my patients have intractable conditions and other complicating factors. Traditionally, acupuncture is not used as a stand-alone therapy and outside of hospital settings is often combined with other modalities such as herbal medicine, therapeutic massage, etc. Achieving results in this setting can be difficult considering the limitations under which I operate.

One way I have been able to improve the outcomes of my acupuncture patients is to seek out lots of training in acupuncture traditions specific for chronic pain management. I have developed a specialty in Chronic Pain Management through my clinical experience and through the doctorate program I attended. I have tried to seek out the very best chronic pain acupuncture techniques, including Traditional Chinese Medicine style, Master Tung's Acupuncture, Richard Tan's Balance Method, Zhu's Scalp Acupuncture, Kiiko Matsumoto style, Integrated Neuromuscular Acupoint System (INMAS) and auriculotherapy. I use these approaches in combination to render the best possible effect and the longest-lasting relief.

In general, acupuncturists have a number of approaches to them in the delivery of acupuncture. It's not just one homogenous thing. We may choose local acupuncture points – points at or nearby areas affected by pain. This is also known in some circles as "trigger-point therapy," or "dry-needling." It is certainly a legitimate way of delivering acupuncture but certainly not the only or even the best way.

Distal acupuncture is another way in which the acupuncturist chooses points which are far away from but somehow connected to affected areas. These protocols have a tendency to work not just on the symptom itself but also the patient's constitution. Therefore, we have a greater potential of rendering lasting changes in a patient's condition when we use distal points (more so than with local acupuncture).

There are also "micro-system" acupuncture protocols. It is believed that certain areas of the body (such as the auricle of the ear, the hand, or the scalp) are "reflections" of the entire body. In auriculotherapy (one of my favorite approaches), there are hundreds of points in the auricle of the ear which correspond

to musculoskeletal structures, internal organs, the endocrine system, the nervous system, and for specific conditions. I can deliver a complete treatment protocol using strictly ear points and often render very good results with this approach.

Of course every patient is unique and techniques that work in one case (or in the same case at a different time) will not always render the same results. A part of my work as the acupuncture provider is to discover which approaches and protocols are the most useful for any given patient at any given point in time. To complicate matters further, human beings are extremely adaptable. Any stimulus which is provided to a person (such as acupuncture needling) will lose its effect over time. Needling the same points over and over renders less and less effect. Therefore I must remain flexible in my approach to any case. I am in the habit of changing approaches with each treatment session while always addressing the chief complaint and attempting to "tease out" the best effects. The result of this approach is to render longer-lasting and more complete relief in a short course of treatment.

It is not uncommon for me to choose different approaches at each treatment session for each patient. There are many ways to approach back pain as an example. To do so, I may do one treatment session with body-points at distal locations, another with local points, and another with strictly ear acupuncture points, and a fourth combining body and ear acupuncture points. I sometimes combine local acupuncture points with electrical stimulation as well. Again, electro-acupuncture is not a requirement to achieving good results in every case. I must experiment a bit in each case to discover which treatment approaches will be optimal.

You should feel free to express results that other acupuncture providers have rendered previously in your case as this is useful information for me to take into account. I can't guarantee that those approaches will be what I perceive as what is best for your case at this time. If those approaches turn out to be apropos and replicable in my clinic, then I am more than happy to adjust my approach to provide you with what works best in your case. Keep in mind that what may ultimately be best for you could be something which you have yet to try. All I would ask of my patients is to keep an open mind and to show up for treatment. If you can do that, we'll know sooner rather than later what is and is not working for you.

## What is acupuncture?

Historically, acupuncture is one component of traditional Chinese medicine. It is a method of inserting fine needles into the body at specific points to stimulate healing. These points can be stimulated by other methods as well, such as acupressure massage. Sometimes, a small electrical current is passed through the acupuncture needles.

## How does acupuncture work?

We don't know for sure, however there are some ideas. The classical Chinese explanation is that a life energy, called *qi* (pronounced CHEE), circulates in channels, called *meridians* throughout the body much like blood circulates in arteries and veins. If the *qi* is blocked, disease can occur. Acupuncture is a method to balance the flow of *qi*. There are many studies demonstrating how acupuncture affects the body processes, but we don't know the entire story. It has been shown to stimulate the nervous system, releasing chemicals that effect pain.

## Who benefits from acupuncture?

Research to date shows acupuncture may be beneficial for some patients with chronic pain, especially musculoskeletal pain, and for nausea and vomiting. Other conditions may benefit from acupuncture, but studies are not clear.

## Who does acupuncture?

Acupuncture is most commonly done by Licensed Acupuncturists (LAc). In California, LAc's are certified by the California Acupuncture Board after completing a training program and successfully passing a certifying examination. Physicians practice acupuncture under their medical license. At KP, physician acupuncturists have completed a specific course of acupuncture study.

## Will acupuncture cure my pain?

Acupuncture can help decrease pain for some people, some of the time. Although it *may* last for

a long time, it is usually temporary. Therefore, acupuncture is one method to decrease pain while you learn other forms of pain management. Most clinicians recommend using acupuncture as a way to establish pain control so that you can participate in other forms of pain management that can maintain pain relief.

## How long with the pain relief last?

It varies, but usually acupuncture gives temporary relief, lasting hours, days, or weeks. Acupuncture is meant to control pain while you participate in the complete pain management program.

## How will I know if acupuncture will work?

We generally know if acupuncture will help you within 4-5 treatments. When it does help, it can be immediate, or it may take a number of treatments. It is often helpful to keep a log of how your symptoms respond.

## Does acupuncture hurt?

It is unusual for the needles to really hurt, but if they do, let the acupuncturist know right away. Most patients feel only minimal pain as the needles are inserted, or as they are stimulated. Some feel no pain at all.

## Is acupuncture safe?

Yes, this procedure is safe. However, like with any procedure there are risks, side effects, and the possibility of complications. Risks from acupuncture are very rare. These risks include infection, bleeding, or injury (e.g. collapsed lung). We only use sterile needles one time, so the risk of infection is minimal. If you have difficulty stopping your bleeding for any reason, let the acupuncturist know. It is very rare for the needle to injure a body part. Occasionally people feel faint from the needle. At times symptoms may fluctuate, increasing or decreasing, associated with the treatment.

*Please turn over*

## How do I get acupuncture?

Your physician or nurse practitioner must refer you to the acupuncture program, which may be associated with the chronic pain program. The clinicians in the acupuncture program will determine whether acupuncture would be an appropriate component of the treatment program for your condition.

## Is acupuncture covered by my Kaiser Permanente health care plan?

Yes and no. Like most of the services and treatments Kaiser Permanente provides, it is an option that can be used when it is appropriate. Clinical recommendations for the use of acupuncture are based on the available scientific evidence. Periodically we review the medical literature to make decisions on which types of conditions will respond to acupuncture care. At this time acupuncture is recommended as an option in the care of patients with chronic pain.

## Who shouldn't get acupuncture?

Contraindications for acupuncture include difficulty with bleeding problems or on anti-coagulant medicine; active infection over the site to be needled; pregnancy is avoided because of the risk of inducing labor. Electrical acupuncture is not recommended for patients with pacemakers.

## What do I do if acupuncture does not work for my pain or I don't want it?

Sometimes acupuncture works, and sometimes it doesn't. The treatment of chronic pain generally consists of several methods used in combination, rather than just one method alone. Research has shown that physical therapy, medications, exercise, relaxation, and changing negative thought patterns can help people better manage pain. Acupuncture is meant to help while you learn other self-management techniques, such as acupressure, physical rehabilitation and exercise, as well as psychotherapy (e.g. cognitive behavioral therapy). Discuss these and other options with

your physician, chronic pain management specialist, or Licensed Acupuncturist for more information.

## What is acupressure and how is it different from acupuncture?

Acupressure is an ancient Chinese healing art that uses the fingers to press key points on the surface of the skin that are thought to stimulate the body's natural healing abilities. It is believed that when these points are pressed, they release qi in order to stimulate healing, and decrease muscle tension, as well as promote the circulation of blood and body fluids.

Acupuncture and acupressure use the same key points. The difference is that in acupuncture needles are used to stimulate these points, whereas in acupressure fingers and pressure are used to stimulate these points.

While receiving acupuncture you may also be taught acupressure. It is important for you to practice acupressure at home. Practicing acupressure at home can maximize the benefits of acupuncture.

### When to call Kaiser Permanente

If after acupuncture, you experience:

- Bleeding at the needle site that will not stop
- Redness, swelling, and symptoms of infection at the needle site

The information presented here is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical care and information you receive from your physician or health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have further questions, please consult your physician or other health care professional

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Department of Complementary and alternative Medicine  
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# PAIN SENSATION

*The actual feeling of the pain you are experiencing  
(stabbing, throbbing, aching, burning, tightness)*

0

## No Pain

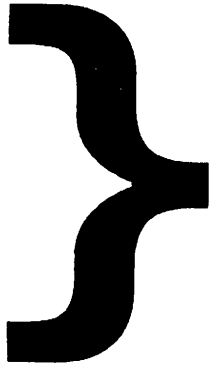
*Pain Free*

1

2

3

4



## Functional

*The pain is present*

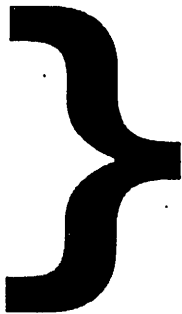
*It does not get in the way*

*No effect on my daily activities and my life*

5

6

7



## Uncomfortable

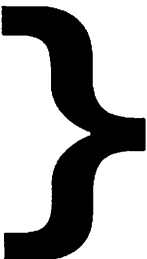
*Hard to move, cannot concentrate*

*Impacting my abilities*

*Affects my daily activities and my life*

8

9



## Severe

*Not able to leave my home*

*Unable to do anything: I am in Bed*

*High Effect on my daily activities and my life*

10

## Unbearable

*Out of Control, Overwhelmed*

*Cannot tolerate the excruciating sensation*

*Seeking Immediate Attention*

*(Urgent Care/Emergency Room)*