



South Warwickshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Acupuncture and Pregnancy

A safe, effective and drug free treatment
option during pregnancy

At Warwick Hospital

Patient Information

What is acupuncture and what does it feel like?

Acupuncture is the insertion of fine needles through the skin to help encourage the body to heal itself. The needles are single use and are so fine most people don't feel them however it is normal to feel a tingle or a dull ache once inserted. Many people feel relaxed during the treatment.

What happens when I go for treatment?

You will be given a full explanation about the treatment and the midwife acupuncturist, will take a history from you. The midwife acupuncturist works alongside the professionals that provide your care during your pregnancy.

You will be asked to sign a consent form and given an opportunity to ask questions.

You may be asked to remove some clothing to facilitate the insertion of the needles which will be left in place for approximately 20 minutes. Privacy will be given at all times.

What are the benefits?

Acupuncture can relieve symptoms of some physical and psychological conditions and may encourage the body to heal itself.

What are the side effects?

- Bruising at the needle site
- Drowsiness
- Dizziness
- Feeling faint

These side effects are not long term.

Pregnancy involves many changes both physically and emotionally. Acupuncture can offer a safe and effective, drug free option during all stages of pregnancy, and also supports the post-natal recovery. Conditions treated include:

- Nausea/vomiting
- Heartburn/reflux
- Headaches/migraines

- Pelvic discomfort/backache
- Anxiety/depression
- Encouragement for optimal positioning of baby for birth
- Labour encouragement

ACUPUNCTURE FOR ANXIETY AND STRESS

Anxiety and stress levels may be high if you have a particular worry about your pregnancy. Acupuncture can stimulate chemical changes to help alleviate these feelings. Current research shows that acupuncture can have positive effects on most of the body's systems. These include the nervous system, hormones, endocrine system and the reproductive system.

BIRTH PREPARATION

The optimal time for pre-birth acupuncture is from 36 weeks until the birth of your baby. It prepares your body for the most efficient, natural birth possible.

Acupuncture offers mums the opportunity to prepare for the labour process, to be relaxed, confident and have enough energy reserves to meet the challenge of the birthing process and the demands of caring for your newborn.

The birth preparation helps with:

- Reducing stress and anxiety
- Preparing the pelvis for labour
- Boosting energy and stamina for labour
- Promoting optimal positioning of baby for birth
- Encouraging spontaneous labour

ENCOURAGING SPONTANEOUS LABOUR

Acupuncture can help encourage the onset and progress of spontaneous labour.

Acupuncture can help with the cascade of hormones (oxytocin) that stimulate the ripening of the cervix. Treatment may also encourage the baby to enter the pelvis in good alignment to the cervix which further supports the natural progress of labour.

MOXIBUSTION

Moxibustion is the application of heat from the herb moxa, to the acupuncture points on your little toes. This treatment is offered to encourage babies in the breech position (bottom first) to turn head first.

Moxibustion may be offered to you from 33 weeks gestation. Ideally treatment is at 34-35 weeks, but can still be useful when used later in the pregnancy. This treatment can also help babies that are not in the optimal position prior to birth, such as those that are lying back to back.

Payment

Each Acupuncture treatment session costs £35.

Moxibustion treatment costs £40.

Accepted methods of payment are credit/debit card.

For further information email: acupuncture@swft.nhs.uk

Equality Statement

At South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust we are fully committed to quality and diversity, both as an employer and as a service provider. We have a policy statement in our Equality Strategy that clearly outlines our commitment to equality for service users, patients and staff.

- You and your family have the right to be treated fairly and to be routinely involved in decisions about your treatment and care. You can expect to be treated with dignity and respect. You will not be discriminated against on any grounds including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- You have a responsibility to treat other service users, patients and or staff with dignity and respect.

Our information for patients can also be made available in other languages, Braille, audio tape, disc or in large print.

PALS

We offer a Patient Advice Liaison Service (PALS). This is a confidential service for families to help with any questions or concerns about local health services.

You can contact the service by the direct telephone line on 01926 600054, by email: Pals@swft.nhs.uk or by calling in person to the PALS office, which is located in the Lakin Road entrance to the hospital.

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