

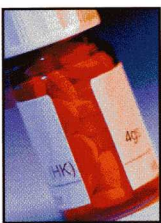
Acupuncture & Depression

Depression can be debilitating for those who experience it. Prolonged feelings of sadness, discouragement, and hopelessness greatly affect our quality of life.

At one time or another each of us have experienced some form of depression. It's a healthy response to events in our lives that seem overwhelming. When we are balanced, physically and emotionally, we can easily bounce back from a depressed state and move on with our lives. But, when negative feelings and emotions become persistent and consistent, depression may set in.



Today, more than 28 million Americans are taking antidepressant and anti-anxiety drugs.¹ In 1998 doctors wrote more than 130 million prescriptions for antidepressants. According to the *Physician Desk Reference*, the top antidepressant drugs only address signs and symptoms associated with depression, and can cause a myriad of side effects; insomnia, anxiety, listlessness, fatigue, body rash, tremors, facial tics, diarrhea, loss of appetite, and sexual dysfunction. Depression alone is stressful enough on the body, although drugs provide temporary relief, they can also add stress to organ functions.



How can acupuncture help?

Acupuncture and Chinese medicine incorporate thousands of years of experience in treating depression. Not only can they help to alleviate the signs and symptoms accompanying depression, they can address the root causes and underlying imbalances that have contributed to the problem in the first place.



Acupuncturists are aware of the powerful interplay between our body and emotions, the two are inseparable. When we experience emotional upset, our internal environment becomes disrupted, likewise, when we experience physical problems, our emotions can become greatly affected.

Over time this disruption leads to what an acupuncturist calls "stagnant or depressed Qi." This diagnosis is unique to acupuncture and Chinese medicine, and eventually it will cause a disharmony within our body, affecting our physical and emotional well-being. If not properly treated, depression will set in.

What will an acupuncturist do?

An acupuncturist will take a complete health history in order to find out where, why, and how Qi has stagnated or depressed. They will develop a unique treatment plan tailored to the specific symptoms and signs of each individual.

The goals of such a plan will be to activate the movement of Qi throughout the entire body, and address the root causes and underlying imbalances. Treating the body as a whole and unique organism, supporting it from illness and disease, toward health, wholeness and optimal performance.

Acupuncture and Chinese medicine provide *safe, natural, drug-free*, and *effective* ways to address depression. The focus is to restore a balanced and continuous flow of Qi throughout the body and mind.

- Acupuncture is not a magic bullet. You may need to receive weeks or months of treatment in order to see lasting results. Give yourself the time required so that you can experience the maximum benefits acupuncture and Chinese medicine have to offer.
- Surround yourself with people whom you trust to provide objective and unbiased input and insight. Develop a support group of friends, loved ones, family and co-workers who can lend an ear and listen to you.
- Breathe, go slow, and think things through. Don't make too many life changes all at once. A few at a time will support you and not overwhelm your experiences.
- Try to get at least 20 minutes of simple exercise at least 3 days per week, if not more. Take a daily walk, breathe deeply and let it all go.
- Remember, you are not alone, others are experiencing similar things as you are.
- Smile.

¹ Acupuncture Today; December 2001
² Boston Globe; November 17, 1999