

PATIENT INFORMATION

Acupuncture for Xerostomia (Dry Mouth)

What is it?

Acupuncture is a treatment derived from ancient Chinese medicine and is often seen as a form of complementary or alternative medicine. Fine needles are inserted at certain sites in the body for therapeutic purposes. It involves the stimulation of specific points on the skin, by the insertion of tiny needles, to free the flow of energy (this is called Qi) which it is believed encourages a healthy body state. We offer Medical Acupuncture, which is a modified version.

Is it safe?

Acupuncture is safe and we use only high quality pre sterilised disposable needles. Acupuncture is widely used and it has been estimated that one million treatments are given on the NHS in England each year.

What evidence is there?

There is ever increasing research and evidence to support the effectiveness of acupuncture for various ailments, albeit the exact mechanism remains largely a mystery.

In our patient cohort, 70 to 80% of the patients find some improvement.

Will it hurt?

When inserted, the fine needles give a feeling of mild discomfort at the most (temporarily). Occasionally a more intense sensation is experienced; this is thought to indicate the movement of Qi at the acupuncture point.

What happens at the sessions?

Before you attend, the Head and Neck Clinical Nurse specialist will complete a patient proforma with you over the telephone to ensure you meet the criteria. The sessions, which are always on a Friday afternoon, are in groups of '3', (three patients per group). We have found this to be a valuable source of support, for patients suffering from the same condition and proves to be effective time management.

At the first session, you will be given a 'briefing on the treatment plan'. You will then be asked to rate your dryness on a simple 0-10 score and sign a consent form before treatment starts. In total expect to be in the department for approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour.

If you would like to be considered for a trial of acupuncture, please let your ENT or MAXFAC surgeon know and they will make a referral for you.

Contacts:

Head & Neck Clinical Nurse Specialists
Tel: (01803) 655044

British Acupuncture Council
Tel: **020 873 504 00**
Website: www.acupuncture.org.uk

The British Medical Acupuncture Society
Tel: **01606 786 782**
Website: www.medical-acupuncture.co.uk

NHS Website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/acupuncture/>

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.