

## Acupuncture Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is acupuncture?** Acupuncture is a treatment that stimulates various body points by penetrating the skin with thin metal needles. Chinese Medicine draws on more than 2,000 years of collective wisdom.
- **How does acupuncture work?** In traditional Chinese Medicine, ailments are described in terms of an excess of or deficiency in Yin or Yang – opposite forces that ideally balance each other. Energy (Qi) flows through the meridians or pathways of the body. Acupuncture points are found on the meridians. Needling specific acupuncture points helps restore the balance of Yin and Yang by reducing disruptions along the meridians, improving the flow of Qi, and promoting healing.
- **Does it hurt?** No, acupuncture needles are very fine. Aside from a momentary pinching sensation, acupuncture is relatively painless.
- **What conditions can acupuncture address?** Pain, xerostomia (dry mouth), bowel issues (diarrhea/constipation), anxiety/depression, peripheral neuropathy, fatigue, insomnia/sleep disturbances, nausea/vomiting, hot flashes, leukopenia (low white blood cell count), and neutropenia (low number of neutrophils, a type of white blood cell).
- **Is acupuncture grounded in evidence-based science?** Yes! There is an abundance of scientific research supporting acupuncture – especially in the area of oncology acupuncture.
- **Who qualifies to receive acupuncture services at Life with Cancer?** Inova patients in active treatment or experiencing side effects from treatments within the last 12 months may receive acupuncture at LWC.
- **How much does it cost?** The first (6) acupuncture treatments are cost-free.
- **Can I tip the acupuncturist?** Our acupuncturist does not accept tips/gratuities. If desired, we welcome you to express your gratitude by the way of a donation. (<https://www.lifewithcancer.org/get-involved/ways-to-donate/>)
- **How many treatments can I receive?** Each patient is eligible to receive (6) acupuncture treatments.
- **What if I want to continue getting acupuncture beyond the (6) treatments?** Your acupuncturist can provide you a list of other well-qualified acupuncturists in the area to contact at your convenience.
- **How often should I come for treatment?** It depends on the nature of your symptoms – for acute symptoms such as persistent nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, severe anxiety, and dry mouth twice a week is ideal. Otherwise once per week is recommended.
- **What should I wear to treatment?** Loose-fitting clothing is recommended.
- **How do I sign up?** The easiest way is to log onto the LWC website ([www.lifewithcancer.org](http://www.lifewithcancer.org)). Or simply click on this link (<https://lifewithcancer.as.me/acupuncture>)
- **Where do I go for acupuncture?** LWC offers acupuncture at (5) INOVA locations throughout the NOVA area. The schedule is found on the LWC website (click on the link above).
- **Is it safe to receive acupuncture if I'm taking blood thinners?** Yes - because acupuncture needles are so small in gauge, there is rarely any bleeding when the needles are removed.
- **Is it safe to receive acupuncture when I'm simultaneously undergoing chemotherapy treatment?** Yes, in fact, acupuncture is very helpful in helping to quell the unpleasant side effects of chemotherapy.
- **Is it safe to receive acupuncture while simultaneously undergoing radiation therapy?** Consult with your oncologist first. While acupuncture will not interfere with the efficacy of your radiation therapy, some oncologists recommend that you finish all radiation treatments before commencing with acupuncture.
- **Who is the acupuncturist at Life with Cancer?** Our lead acupuncturist is named Reid Saunders. You can see his bio here (<https://www.lifewithcancer.org/bio/reid-saunders-lac/>)