

Chinese Medicine / Acupuncture / Acu-massage Treatment: First Visit Guide

Logistics for in-home visitation

Timing

For in-home visitations, Dr. Kajima arrives 5 to 10 minutes prior to the start of your appointment to set up, so your appointment can begin on time.

Treatment space

If you are fully mobile, please make space for a treatment table of the dimensions 32" by 73" (81cm by 185.5cm). Dr. Kajima will bring a treatment table with her unless you have one. If you are handicapped and bound to a wheelchair or a bed, there is no need to clear space for a treatment table. The treatment will be delivered in place and in position which is the most comfortable for you. If you are fully mobile and are having an acu-massage, whole-body massage will be performed on a treatment table. Please have a small side table available where Dr. Kajima can put her instruments.

Clothing

For acupuncture or acu-massage (if immobile), wear comfortable loose clothes and a button top to allow for easy draping. There is no need to completely disrobe. However, it would be helpful if you could wear sleeveless top and shorts. For acu-massage, mobile patients can choose between shiatsu or Swedish massage for the massage part of the treatment. In case of Swedish massage, a patient will need to disrobe to underwear.

Consultation/Assessment

At your initial consultation, Dr. Kajima will discuss your health with you concerns based on your online *Health Questionnaire* and determine how your symptoms can best be treated with acupuncture and Chinese medicine. She will review your medical reports, lab results, imaging, supplements and medications. She will analyze your pulse, which is an important method of Chinese medicine diagnosis. Six pulses are felt on each wrist, which correspond to your major organs and their function. Each pulse is located at a specific position on your wrist. Lucia will also observe your tongue, facial and body coloring, and skin temperature and texture on different parts of your body. She may perform the abdominal palpation and check your vital signs (heart rate, respiratory rate, body temperature and blood pressure). For neurological conditions, she will perform a neurological screening exam. However, this is not a substitute for formal neurological examination by a neurologist when a screening exam reveals significant findings. During the intake, Dr. Kajima may discover that you may need to be referred out to a different healthcare practitioner in addition to receiving a treatment by her.

At follow-up appointment all diagnostic measures will be performed again to track your progress, but questioning will be reduced to the essentials.

Treatment

The treatment will be determined based on your health review and physical exam. The treatment will consist of acupuncture (including scalp acupuncture or electric stimulation), *dao yin* (Chinese physiotherapy), and other Chinese medicine techniques such as moxibustion, cupping or acupressure. If necessary, guidance to nutrition, supplements, herbs, exercises, massage, hot/cold therapy, light modulation therapy will be incorporated per your permission. Following the initial appointment, you will receive a detailed treatment plan through *Patient Portal*, to which you will have access.

[What is acupuncture?](#)

The term acupuncture refers both to the overall practice of traditional Chinese Medicine and to the specific therapy of fine needle stimulation at strategic points on your body. It is a complete medical paradigm that has been evolving for thousands of years through clinical experience, and in modern times through the scientific research. In the Chinese medicine framework, the free flow of Qi throughout the body produces optimal health. Qi is believed to flow along twelve primary and other pathways, called meridians, channels and collaterals, which are connected to specific parts of the body, for example, organs, muscles, sinews, or skin. If Qi is blocked in any way, your well-being is weakened and illness may result.

Acupuncture works to restore the flow of Qi throughout your body by placing very thin, stainless steel, sterile needles at various points in your body. There are about 365 acupuncture points recognized by the World Health Organization with new points being discovered by modern research every year.

[How can acupuncture help with neurological conditions?](#)

Acupuncture will not restore function that has been lost due to the disease or injury process. However, it may be able to modify activity in those systems that are still functioning to some extent. The mechanism involves local, segmental, extra-segmental and central regulatory effects as well as effects relating to myofascial trigger points.

Inserting a needle through the skin will increase blood flow to the skin and to the muscle. Needling according to the segmental nerve supply modulates impulses from the skin, muscles, joints, bones and at some levels of viscera to the spinal cord via somatic nerves. For example, a therapeutic effect would be ankle pain relief. Inserting an acupuncture needle into the body will also influence structures in the brainstem such as the periaqueductal grey area, as well as higher centers such as structures of the limbic, endocrine and autonomic systems. These may provide more global effects on the body such as improvement of sleep quality or mood. Finally, needling myofascial trigger points has the potential to reduce pain and contribute to improved muscle function.

Here is a list of some common neurological conditions that have been found to benefit from acupuncture treatment:

- Recovery from stroke or traumatic brain injury
- Absent or impaired sensation (paresthesia, neuropathy)
- Trigeminal neuralgia
- Cerebral palsy
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Bell's palsy
- Spasticity
- Dyskinesia (incl. Parkinsonian dyskinesia)
- Weakness or paralysis
- Multiple sclerosis
- Parkinson's disease
- Bladder and bowel dysfunction
- Insomnia
- Fatigue
- Depression, anxiety and mood disorders
- Impaired hearing, vision or sense of taste and smell
- Dysphagia

[What happens during the treatment?](#)

During your treatment, Dr. Kajima will first start by selecting points along the appropriate meridians, which will be cleaned with cotton that has been dipped in alcohol. Sterilized needles are then placed on the selected points. Acupuncture needles are different lengths and gauges, but are generally hair-thin, solid and made of stainless steel. Acupuncturists use sterilized and disposable needles.

Typically, needles are placed just below the skin's surface, but some may go deeper, depending on the point location, condition being treated and your body constitution. Usually, most patients only experience a brief sensation as the needle is first being placed. Once the needles are in place, they generally cannot be felt, although, for some patients, sensation like tingling, heaviness, numbness, slight cold or heat, or even electric sensation may be felt for a few seconds after the insertion. The insertion is normally not painful, however, in case of neuropathy or sensory nerve damage, patients may feel a strong sensation or experience brief pain as needles are inserted. On very rare occasions, when patients undergo severe stress or are very fatigued, they may faint due to sudden drop in their blood sugar. To minimize the incidence of fainting and maximize the therapeutic effect of acupuncture, you should eat at least 1-2 hours prior to your appointment and make sure that you are well-hydrated. The great thing about acupuncture is that it can be performed in any position and on the most parts of the body, at any age safely and without any lasting negative side effects. For example, even if you have a missing limb or you cannot disrobe, sit or lie down, whether you are conscious or fell unconscious, you can receive acupuncture.

The treatment will take 60 minutes to 2 hours depending on the patient's condition and treatment plan. For post-stroke or traumatic head injury patients, the treatment takes 1.5 to 2 hours. For patients with headache, the treatment takes 45 to 60 minutes.

Dr. Kajima may stimulate needles during the treatment either manually or with help of electrostimulation machine. After she removes your needles, your insertion points are gently cleansed with cotton ball. She may also use other methods in addition to acupuncture as mentioned above.

[What should I do after treatment?](#)

At least 2 hours after your treatment, it is vital to avoid any strenuous mental or physical activity to maximize the treatment benefits. Please, also do not touch the acupoints where the needles were inserted. Your body is in a recovery mode and needs time to process the treatment. Please follow all specific instructions Dr. Kajima gave you. If you notice any concerning symptoms, please contact Dr. Kajima immediately at (415)987-1594. For emergency situations, call 911 right away.

[What sensations may I have after the treatment?](#)

Some patients feel the sites where the needles were inserted even after the needles were removed for a few minutes after the treatment. This is normal. Some patients feel immediate sense of relief, peace, improved mood, energy or sleep. Other patients may feel their symptoms worsened for a day or two but then they feel significantly better. This is normal. Patient's immediate and acute response or short-term discomfort after treatment is not suggestive of the future therapeutic outcome. This is a common response of a human body to a stimulus. There is no "one right" response everyone will experience.