

AHS Complementary and Integrative Medicine Section: Patient Education Kit for Migraine

Acupuncture

Acupuncture is a Traditional Chinese Medicine treatment that has been used for centuries to treat headaches and other conditions.

- Modern scientific evidence shows that acupuncture can be effective for the prevention of episodic migraine. While it could also be helpful for acute migraine attacks for some, the evidence is limited and inconsistent among existing studies
- Recommended minimum frequency and duration is 1-2 sessions per week, with a total of 8-10 sessions per round. In studies, acupuncture treatment periods range from 4 to 24 weeks, and the total number of acupuncture sessions ranges from 8 to 24.
- Common side effects include bruising, bleeding, fainting (if you are not lying down).
- If you are pregnant or have other medical conditions, please talk to your physician about whether or not this is a treatment you can try.

To learn more about acupuncture for migraine, you can watch this video, “Five Important Things to Know before Starting Acupuncture Treatment for Migraine” from the American Migraine Foundation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrzumXTQQ2M>

Acupressure could be a good home-based substitute, if you do not have access to acupuncture. To see a demonstration of how you can perform acupressure at home, please see [Lauren’s video].

- To learn more, please visit: <https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/acupuncture-in-depth>

Reference:

Natbony LR, Zhang N. Acupuncture for Migraine: a Review of the Data and Clinical Insights. Curr Pain Headache Rep. 2020 May 29;24(7):32.