**Q & A**

Some common questions are answered below. Please call or email us if have other questions.

What is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is a technique that is part of the system called Traditional Chinese Medicine.

It is a method of promoting circulation through the body by inserting tiny needles along pathways called meridians that run through your body. Acupuncture has been shown to help speed the healing process and alleviate pain. It promotes proper circulation and function and helps your body to regulate itself. Acupuncture is a simple, gentle technique. Nothing is taken out of or put into your body, rather it is a way of maximizing your body’s own efforts to heal and correct itself. Acupuncture is a time tested and scientifically proven method of traditional health care.

What will my acupuncturist do?

During the initial exam a full health history will be taken. Questions will be asked regarding symptoms, health and lifestyle. Your acupuncturist will complete a comprehensive acupuncture assessment. She will then propose an acupuncture treatment plan for you, with the number of visits and the frequency of acupuncture care that is best for you. She may also make recommendations for you for foods, herbs, supplements or practices that can maximize the effect of your acupuncture treatment plan.

Are herbal recommendations included in the care plan?

Herbal recommendations are included in the care plan when they are appropriate, and if the patient has an interest in taking herbal medicine. Some patients opt to include herbs in their care plan, while others do not. The fee for the herbal recommendation is included in the initial visit fee, but the cost of the herbal products is not included.

Is acupuncture safe for children?

Acupuncture is a safe, effective method for children. It is often combined with acupressure and massage. Children who come to Balance enjoy their treatments. Pediatric visits usually take 30 – 45 minutes.

How many visits will I need and how often?

The number of visits you will need depends on the treatment plan for your condition and your constitution (the overall state of your health.) An acute problem (one that has recently started) may be resolved after 1 to 3 treatments, a more chronic condition may require 10 to 12 visits. Your acupuncturist will communicate with you about her expectations for your treatment plan. People are often treated weekly in the initial stages of care, then less frequently (ie. every other week, once per month) as they improve. Some people choose to use acupuncture as part of a long term strategy for managing their chronic problems. For others, once the issue has resolved, there is no need to continue treatment.

How much does it cost?

Initial Visit $115

Follow – Visit $85

Will my insurance cover acupuncture?

Some insurance policies offer coverage for acupuncture, others do not.  If you have insurance coverage, you will pay for your treatment in full at the time of service and then you may submit paperwork to your insurance company for reimbursement. We do not bill your insurance company on your behalf and are not an in-network provider for any insurance companies. To find out about your coverage, call the customer service number on the back of your insurance card and ask if your policy will cover acupuncture by an out of network provider. We cannot guarantee insurance reimbursement. Many people use Healthcare Savings Accounts (HSA) or Flex Fund accounts to cover the cost of their acupuncture treatment. Medicare does not cover acupuncture performed by a licensed acupuncturist.

How safe is acupuncture?

Acupuncture is a safe and gentle technique with very few risks or side effects. Acupuncture needles are very tiny, disposable, sterile needles that are inserted according to the same clean needle technique rules that are followed in any medical office.

How are acupuncturists educated?

To practice acupuncture in New York State, one must hold a Master’s Degree from a nationally accredited school and be board certified by the NCCAOM. Abigail Thomas holds a Master’s Degree in Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine as well as a Doctorate Degree in Acupuncture & Chinese Medicine.

Does Acupuncture hurt?

At Balance, we specialize in gentle acupuncture. Gentle needling technique and the tiny size of the acupuncture needles make them unlikely to cause pain. Many times, the patient does not feel the insertion of the needles. Sometimes, a person may feel a quick sensation. Once the acupuncture treatment is in place, you will rest for a time. During the rest period, there is no pain and people very often fall asleep. You will be asked if you are comfortable and encouraged to tell the acupuncturist right away if you have any discomfort.

What can I expect during my treatment?

You will lie comfortably on a massage table, covered to your comfort with sheets. We make accommodations for your specific needs regarding of the position of your body so that you can be comfortable during your treatment. The acupuncture needles are placed and then you will rest for between 30 and 45 minutes.

Will my treatment include massage?

Massage may be available as an additional service during your acupuncture session, depending on availability.

How long does a treatment take?

You should plan to be here for approximately one hour for your follow up treatments and 90 minutes for your initial visit.

How do I know if acupuncture will help me?

We offer a complimentary phone consultation to help you decide if acupuncture is a good treatment option for you. Just call us at 607-274-7520 or email us at abigailthomas@ithacabalance.com to set up your phone consult.

Can I come to Balance for Massage Therapy?

Yes, there are two ways to have massage therapy at Balance. We offer massage therapy as an addition to your acupuncture treatment (depending on availability) and we offer relaxation massage, which can be scheduled on Saturdays and Sundays.

**Inclement Weather Policy:** The office will be closed when the Ithaca City School district closes for inclement weather. You will receive notification by text, phone or email if your appointment needs to be rescheduled due to inclement weather.

**Cancellation Policy:**

Please allow at least 24 hours notice if you need to cancel your appointment.

There is a $35 fee for cancellation with less than 24 hours notice. If your visit can be rescheduled within the same week, the cancellation fee may be waived.

Please understand that while we make every effort to schedule your visits at a convenient time for you, we cannot accommodate last-minute cancellation or late arrivals.

**Illness Policy:**

Please cancel your visit if you are sick with cough, sneezing, fever or any other signs of acute viral illness. The cancellation fee is waived if you are cancelling due to illness.