

# Acupuncture and Depression

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Depression can be debilitating for those who experience it. Prolonged feelings of sadness, discouragement and hopelessness greatly affect the quality of life. At one time or another, most of us have experienced some form of depression. It's a healthy response to events in our lives that seem overwhelming. When we are physically and emotionally balanced, we can easily bounce back from a depressed state and move on with our lives. However, when negative feelings and emotions become persistent and consistent, depression may set in.

Today, more than 28 million Americans are taking antidepressants and anti-anxiety drugs. In 1998, doctors wrote more than 130 million prescriptions for antidepressants. According to the *Physicians' Desk Reference*, the top antidepressant drugs only address signs and symptoms associated with depression and can cause a variety of side effects including insomnia, anxiety, restlessness, fatigue, body rash, tremors, facial tics, diarrhea, loss of appetite and sexual dysfunction. Depression is stressful enough on the body—and while medications may provide temporary relief, they can further compromise our health.

**How can acupuncture help?** Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine incorporate thousands of years of experience in treating depression. Not only can they help to alleviate the signs and symptoms accompanying depression, they can address the root causes and underlying imbalances that have contributed to the problem, safely and naturally.

Acupuncturists are aware of the powerful interplay between our body and emotions—the two are inseparable. When we experience emotional upset, our internal environment becomes disrupted. Likewise, when we experience physical problems, our emotion can become greatly affected. Over time, this disruption leads to what an acupuncturist calls “stagnant or depressed Qi.” This diagnosis is unique to acupuncture and Chinese Medicine. Eventually, it can cause a disharmony within our body, affecting our physical and emotional well-being. If not properly treated, this imbalance may lead to depression.

**What will an acupuncturist do?** An acupuncturist will take a complete health history in order to find out where, why, and how Qi has stagnated. Then he or she will develop a unique treatment plan tailored to specific symptoms of each individual. The goal of such a plan will be to activate the movement of Qi throughout the entire body, as well as to address the root causes and underlying imbalances. By treating the body as a whole and unique organism, acupuncture care can support recovery from illness.

Acupuncture and Chinese medicine provide safe, natural, drug-free and effective ways to address depression. The focus is to restore a balanced and continuous flow of Qi throughout the body and mind.

**Acupuncture is not a magic bullet. You may need to receive weeks or months of treatment in order to see lasting results. Give yourself the time required so that you can experience the maximum benefits acupuncture and Chinese Medicine have to offer.**