

# DIABETES

## How Acupuncture Helps



**D**iabetes is an increasingly common condition - approximately 1.3 million people in the United States will be diagnosed with diabetes each year. While it is generally a long-term condition, diabetes can be managed through self-care, nutrition and medication. Another safe and effective approach to managing diabetes and its symptoms is the introduction of acupuncture as a complementary modality. Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) help promote health and well-being.

**Understanding a Complex Condition** The body gets energy from food through the process of digestion. Food is broken down into glucose (or sugar) which passes into the bloodstream. Then the glucose is moved into muscle, fat and liver cells by the hormone insulin, which is produced by the pancreas. However, if

### QUICK FACTS

Symptoms of Diabetes include:

- Increased thirst
- Increased urination
- Increased appetite
- Fatigue
- Blurred vision
- Slow-healing infections
- Impotence

you have diabetes, your body either does not produce enough insulin, or doesn't respond to it properly, and this leads to high levels of sugar in the blood.

Uncontrolled blood-sugar levels can cause serious complications if left untreated, including blindness, heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, amputation and nerve damage.

### The Two Main Types of Diabetes

**Type I:** Usually diagnosed during childhood, Type I diabetes is an autoimmune disease in which the body's immune system attacks insulin-producing cells. Symptoms usually occur suddenly, and treatment includes daily injections of insulin.

**Type II:** Type II diabetes accounts for 90-95 percent of all diabetic cases, and is usually diagnosed during adulthood. Major risk factors include family history, having high blood pressure or high cholesterol and being overweight and sedentary.

Since symptoms may be mild, many people don't know they have diabetes, this is why it's important to get tested regularly, especially after the age of 45. Testing can also detect pre-diabetes risk factors,

where blood sugar is high, but not yet at diabetic levels. With early detection and treatment, it is far easier to stop the disease from progressing. In addition, testing can help control your symptoms and prevent complications. Treatments often include regular blood-sugar monitoring and medications to control your blood sugar levels, as well as diet and exercise regimens.

**A Natural Approach That Works** Acupuncture is a whole-body approach to healing; it takes a holistic and nurturing approach to healing the body. This is done by carefully inserting fine sterile needles to stimulate important acupuncture meridian points found across the body to help promote healing. In addition to the insertion of needles, other techniques are used to stimulate the body's natural healing abilities and to bring about homeostasis.

Acupuncture meridian points activate the body's innate healing abilities acupuncturists call Qi (chee). According to Traditional Chinese Medicine, Qi is the vital energy that animates the body and protects it from illness. Qi flows through pathways called meridians and provides nourishment to the body's cells, tissues, muscles, organs, and glands. When there is an imbalance or blockage in the flow of Qi, symptoms associated with the condition or illness may appear. Acupuncture is just one aspect of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), there are many modalities within TCM that may effectively contribute to restoring the body's natural healing ability.

Most people experience little or no pain when receiving acupuncture - in fact, many people experience a deep sense of relief, relaxation and find acupuncture helps with their specific symptoms and signs.

From a modern scientific perspective, stimulation of acupuncture meridian points causes the release of a multitude of nervous system chemicals in our brain, spinal cord, and muscles that help restore the body's ability to heal naturally.

These chemicals provide tremendous health benefits, whether it is influencing your body to heal more quickly, or simply altering how you may be experiencing your pain. Regardless, the healing and regenerative properties of acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine are truly amazing; the only way to find out if acupuncture is the perfect treatment plan for you is to give it a try.

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