

Valerie Stallbaumer, L.Ac., MSOM

Valerie Stallbaumer is a state licensed acupuncturist who has been practicing acupuncture and oriental medicine full-time since October 1997.

She currently sees patients at Story Medical Clinic - Natural Health in Ames, Iowa.

Valerie received her master's degree in acupuncture and oriental medicine in June 1997 from the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine in Portland, Oregon.

Prior to pursuing a complementary medicine degree, she worked in research at the Oregon Health & Science University in Portland. Valerie also has a Master of Science degree in biology, chemistry and education from the University of Oregon. She taught various science topics at the secondary level for eight years.

In 1991, Valerie was diagnosed with acute post-viral fatigue after suffering years of chronic health problems. After six months of unsuccessful medical treatments, a friend suggested that Valerie try acupuncture. Within weeks, she recovered.

Curiosity led Valerie to explore other methods of complementary health care such as tai chi, qi gong, reflexology, visualization, jin shin do, yoga and nutritional changes. Through these experiences, she learned a more balanced lifestyle, new exercises and a diet that she still practices today.

Valerie is a member of the American Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine and the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine.



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How Oriental Medicine Can Benefit You

ACUPUNCTURE



Story Medical
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What is Acupuncture?

WHAT IS ACUPUNCTURE?

Acupuncture is a branch of oriental medicine. Fine needles are inserted into specific body areas to relieve pain, improve health or produce regional anesthesia.

WHAT IS ORIENTAL MEDICINE?

The health care practice of oriental medicine has been used for more than 3,000 years. It looks for the cause of problems and works to bring the body back to good health. It is a holistic approach that affects the mind, body and spirit.

Oriental medicine includes acupuncture, herbs, massage, exercise and diet advice that lead to a balanced lifestyle. Practitioners are trained in accredited colleges and complete an intense internship program. They must pass a national exam, be licensed by the state, and renew their education annually.



HOW DOES IT WORK?

Acupuncture works on the energy of the body. Health problems are caused by energy being out of balance. If you have pain, it can be due to energy being stuck, deficient or in excess. Many events in your life can affect the quality of your energy — accidents, emotional stress, poor diet and more. The tiny needles used in an acupuncture treatment activate your body's natural methods of healing resulting in balanced, smooth-flowing energy.

WHAT IS A TREATMENT LIKE?

The first visit lasts one and a half hours. The practitioner will ask questions about your health history. It is good to bring a list of medications you take and information on any past surgeries or injuries. Pulses are felt on both wrists and the tongue is viewed.

Finally, the practitioner's diagnosis is determined. Disposable, sterile needles are inserted just under the skin and left for about 20-30 minutes. Most people feel relaxed and sleepy during a treatment.

Follow-up visits last about one hour. Sometimes other techniques may be used such as cupping, electrostimulation or moxibustion; all are painless.

You should drink extra water after a treatment to help cleanse the body. It is best to wait at least an hour or two after a treatment before resuming any heavy lifting or energy demanding activities.

The number of treatments required to correct your problem will depend on how long you have had the problem, as well as your general health condition. Some people do well with only four to five treatments; other may require 10-12 treatments.

DOES IT HURT?

The needles used for treatment are thin, sterile, stainless steel wires. They are not hollow like hypodermic needles, and they do not contain medication. Most people say that they usually do not feel the needles. At worst, the insertion may feel like a mosquito bite.

WILL IT FIX MY PROBLEM?

Acupuncture is used all over the world to cure a variety of health problems. In addition, it is used as a preventative health care practice. Many people get regular treatments.

The World Health Organization and the National Institute of Health have both stated that many types of health problems can be helped with acupuncture treatments.

Such conditions include arthritis, carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis, back or neck pain, insomnia, nausea, depression, addictions, knee or elbow pain, muscle aches, tooth pain, sprains and fibromyalgia.

Other conditions that may respond well to acupuncture include hypertension, fatigue, irritable bowel syndrome, gastric reflux, immune system problems, allergies, constipation, headaches, menopause, menstrual problems, stress and infertility.



WHAT DOES IT COST?

The initial treatment and follow-up treatments are very reasonably priced. Considering that acupuncture can often reduce the need for prescription pain relievers and other medications, eliminate the need for surgery, and help restore good health, it is a very cost-effective health option. Some insurance companies and most flex plans cover acupuncture.