

Headaches

Sometimes the source of a headache is trivial, maybe due to one too many cocktails or stuck in a traffic jam or scrambling to meet a deadline on a work project. Those headaches are easy to avoid if you watch your consumption and your stress levels. But some truly suffer from persistent nagging pain that throbs in the head, source unknown. Even worse, others muddle through nauseating migraines that can put a stop to anything that is planned for the day. Acupuncture helps with headache pain by regulating stagnated liver qi and blood flow through the head.

If a patient comes in to Lincoln Square Acupuncture with headache pain, one of the first questions that will be asked is where do they feel the pain. Which side of the head? Is it around the head, at the front or back of the head? Is it behind the eyes? They will also be asked about the frequency of the headaches and if they are currently suffering from pain. Pay attention to triggers that might cause the pain. It could be foods, menstrual cycle, stress, anger or tension. Are your shoulders resting near your ears? That's tension.

Headaches are caused by stagnate liver qi in the head. Liver qi is in charge of maintaining the flow of blood. Emotions such as anger, frustration, resentment, irritability, bitterness and unfulfilled dreams, slow the liver qi causing it to stagnate. Once qi stagnates, it starts to stew and heat, causing pain. Headaches can start because qi or blood doesn't move to the head.

An excess of qi occurs when the energies of the liver qi flare up (sends qi up to the head), as with the case of anger. A deficiency of qi is due to ruminating thoughts and worry. The acupuncture treatment for both types is basically the same. The needles will be inserted into points that move liver qi and the blood, so for head pain the points will be on the feet. For difficult or chronic cases, the acupuncturist will bleed points by lancing the tip of the ear (ear apex) or at the temple because the blood is stuck in a channel in the head.

A series of acupuncture sessions might be recommended depending on how often the patient gets headaches. Yoga and stretching are effective ways to relieve stress that can

cause headaches. Your emotions affect your qi, so if you're over thinking, obsessing, or worrying, it will slow your qi. It's important to be aware of your emotions and keep them in check.