



## ACUPUNCTURISTS

### Acupuncturists in California

Acupuncturists are professionals who provide health care to individuals experiencing any of a variety of conditions or illnesses. They may provide primary care, complementary care, alternative care or preventive care. Generally acupuncturists rely on philosophies of traditional Chinese medicine to rebalance a person's qi ("chi"). In California, acupuncturists primarily use acupuncture (the insertion of needles into the skin) and herbs to treat patients. Acupuncturists may also use Oriental massage, acupressure, nutrition, moxibustion, breathing techniques and dietary supplements to promote, maintain, and restore health.

The National Institutes of Health has found that acupuncture needle therapy is effective for "postoperative and chemotherapy nausea and vomiting and postoperative dental pain." NIH also stated that acupuncture may help a number of other conditions for which evidence is unclear. Many people have found help for a variety of health complaints through acupuncture and many studies are currently underway to determine efficacy. In California, acupuncturists may not diagnose or treat cancer but may treat the side effects of approved medical cancer treatments as long as the acupuncture treatment does not interfere with the medical treatment.

Because herbs may interact with prescription drugs, patients should always advise their doctors and acupuncturists of all treatments they are undergoing.

### Education

Acupuncture students beginning training programs in 2005 need to complete a 3-4 year, 3000-hour education program at an approved school of acupuncture.

### Credentialing: licensing and certification

To practice acupuncture in California, one must be licensed by the California Acupuncture Board (or be a licensed physician, dentist or podiatrist). The initials "L.Ac." after a practitioner's name indicate that he or

she is a licensed acupuncturist and has met the education and examination requirements of the board. Although not required, many California acupuncturists also seek certification by the [National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine](#).

### Referrals and reimbursement

Licensed acupuncturists in California are independent practitioners. Patients do not need a referral from a doctor or other health care practitioner to see one but may need a referral to get reimbursed for fees paid. Fees for services vary among acupuncturists and patients should contact their health plan directly to find out whether a particular treatment is covered.

To find out if someone is licensed, if there are any disciplinary actions on the person's record, or to file a complaint about an acupuncturist, contact:

#### California Acupuncture Board

444 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> St. #260, Sacramento, CA 95814  
telephone: 916.445.3021; fax: 916.445.3015

E-mail: [acupuncture@dca.ca.gov](mailto:acupuncture@dca.ca.gov)

Website: <http://www.acupuncture.ca.gov/>

### How can I find an acupuncturist?

A physician or other health care professional may recommend a patient to a qualified acupuncturist. Many professional associations offer "Find an acupuncturist" lists of their members, which may not include all licensed practitioners. Patients should check with the board for current license status.

### For more information or to find an acupuncturist:

- [California Acupuncture Board](#)
- [California State Oriental Medicine Association](#)
- [Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Alliance](#)
- [American Association of Oriental Medicine](#)
- [Acupuncture Today's Acupuncturist Locator](#)
- [National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine](#)
- [American Academy of Medical Acupuncture](#)