ACUPUNCTURE TAKES A STAND AGAINST PAIN
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Pain! It’s sometimes agonizing, other times inconsistent yet notably there. It could take up residence anywhere in your body, and don’t think you are immune. At some point, everyone experiences varying degrees of physical pain. Whether the pain is due to an injury, overuse, arthritis, or some unknown reason, the manifestations can impact our day-to-day life, affecting rest, work, and play.

For some people, pain management can become all-consuming even with the use of traditional remedies. Others find options within complementary healing, such as acupuncture, which has shown proven results by notable sources such as Mayo Clinic to relieve and even eliminate pain. It has also been shown to reduce recovery time and prevent the development of chronic pain. Within the scope of Chinese medicine, trained practitioners treat the root (the cause) and address the branches (the symptoms) of every individual. Each pain case is unique, and therefore treatment plans will vary depending on the person.

Acupuncture involves the insertion of fine, sterile, single-use needles into acupuncture points along specific pathways in the body called meridians. The purpose of acupuncture is to return balance to the body either by helping the body to redistribute resources, blood, and oxygen to an area that is lacking, or eliminating areas of swelling and excess fluid. Often with pain there is excessive energy or stagnation of energy that simply needs to be moved in order to decrease discomfort. This is where acupuncture excels. However, the longer the pain has been present, the longer it may take for acupuncture to have a positive impact on the body. Often, acute pain responds more quickly than chronic pain with acupuncture.

Harvard Medical School has conducted research that demonstrates the stimulating affects acupuncture has on the body whereby it produces natural steroids and endorphins. Steroids help to reverse the body’s inflammatory response while endorphins work to disrupt pain signals. Both substances are necessary for breaking the pain cycle. By reducing pain, acupuncture can help avoid the need for costlier and more invasive procedures. If acupuncture is able to control pain adequately, it can also lower the need for painkillers or other medications that can have unwanted side effects and even prolong healing.

Traditional medical facilities, such as North Valley Hospital in Whitefish, have embraced the benefits of acupuncture by supporting patients who wish to use this option while under their care. NVH integrated acupuncture under the umbrella of the Planetree complementary healing program four years ago and has been applauded by the patients who have taken advantage of the program. With a doctor’s prescription, patients can utilize acupuncture to help reduce their discomfort of pain and nausea and make them feel more at ease. For some, there may be an advantage to combining both prescription drugs and acupuncture.

For more information on acupuncture, we invite you to visit www.mayoclinic.com and the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine/National Institute of Health at www.nccam.nih.gov.

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