

Ear Acupuncture

Susan Murray Ear Acupuncture Clinic Information for patients

This leaflet explains the ear acupuncture service at the Kent Oncology Centre, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust. This service is available for people with breast cancer.

Background

People often have side effects following treatment for their cancer, for example, fatigue, sleep disturbances, digestive problems and hot flushes. The diagnosis of cancer alongside these side effects may also have an effect on their emotional well-being.

Research has shown that some women who experience side effects following treatment for breast cancer can be helped by acupuncture, which promotes relaxation and a sense of physical and emotional well-being.

There is a high demand for this type of treatment; using ear acupuncture in a group setting makes it possible to treat more people, thus making the treatment more widely available. People who are eligible will receive six sessions of ear acupuncture on a once weekly basis. The treatments take place in groups of up to 10 people.

What is acupuncture?

This is the insertion of very fine needles into various points of the body. It has been in use across the world for many centuries to treat people with a wide range of illnesses.

What is ear acupuncture?

This is a particular type of acupuncture using very small, fine needles inserted into acupuncture points on the surface of the outer ear. The ear is seen to resemble a foetus and thus represent a mini-map of the body; certain points in the ear relate to the body's internal organs and functions. The Kent Oncology Centre uses a very specific form of ear acupuncture. This protocol or procedure is called the NADA protocol.

What is the NADA protocol?

The NADA protocol was developed during the 1970s. It is now in use across the world to treat a range of conditions. This simple procedure uses up to five acupuncture points on the surface of each ear. Needles inserted just beneath the skin remain in place for 40 minutes. During this time the person relaxes, usually in the company of others receiving the treatment.

After treatment we advise the patient to avoid energetic activities such as exercising or heavy gardening.

'NADA practitioners' deliver this treatment. They are trained to administer the NADA protocol and are members of NADA UK. They are assessed every year and have updated training to maintain high standards of delivery, safety and hygiene. The Kent Oncology Centre is at the forefront in using this protocol to promote relaxation and a sense of well-being and to help manage the side effects of cancer treatments, specifically hot flushes.

Who can use the ear acupuncture service at the Kent Oncology Centre?

Please speak to one of the health care professionals involved in your care and ask if you can use the ear acupuncture service.

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- People with **early stage breast cancer** will be offered a checklist to complete; this will establish whether the NADA protocol is suitable for them.
 - All people with **secondary breast cancer** are eligible to receive this treatment.

What will happen if I am suitable for this treatment?

If you are suitable to receive this treatment, you will be offered a course of six ear acupuncture treatments. These will be on a weekly basis in a group setting with other people.

You will be scheduled for your treatments and will need to consent to treatment. You must also be prepared to complete questionnaires prior to starting treatment and at the end of treatment to help evaluate the outcome of your treatment and the service.

What happens before my first treatment?

Prior to your first treatment the NADA practitioner will explain the acupuncture procedure and discuss the service with you. This is your chance to ask any questions that you may have. Once it is clear that you understand the service and agree to have this treatment, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire on the side effects that you have as well as your overall physical and emotional well-being. You will also be asked to sign a consent form.

What happens on the day of treatment?

The NADA practitioner will make sure that you are agreeable to have your treatment and insert the needles into your ears in the group setting. You will sit for up to 40 minutes in a restful area with other people having ear acupuncture.

We do ask you to sit quietly and relax as much as possible during this time. We may sometimes use relaxing background music if there is noise distraction outside of the treatment room.

Why am I being treated in a group?

Treatment within a group setting is part of the NADA protocol. It also means that we can treat more people in the time available. People who have been treated within a group setting for research studies reported that they enjoyed the group sessions. Many said it helped to be with others experiencing the same symptoms and helped them to feel less isolated.

When is the service available?

We run a weekly clinic on a Tuesday afternoon at the Kent Oncology Centre in Hayley's Room on the Charles Dickens Day Unit.

What are the benefits to me?

Research shows that ear acupuncture helps to:

- promote relaxation
- encourage a sense of physical and emotional well-being
- help with sleep patterns
- manage hot flushes and night sweats (reducing the frequency and severity)

What does ear acupuncture feel like?

Many people find ear acupuncture a relaxing treatment. Some people are more sensitive to the insertion of needles than others and may feel a slight stinging feeling. Any discomfort usually goes away quickly. Most people enjoy the overall relaxing experience.

How will the service be monitored?

This service is part of our on-going commitment to add value to your care. We may ask you to complete other questionnaires so that we can monitor this service.

This data may help us to continue and expand the service so we would very much appreciate your cooperation in completing and returning any questionnaires that we give to you.

Is the treatment safe?

Studies show that acupuncture is a safe form of treatment. The NADA protocol has been used for many years with few reports of problems.

NADA UK trains NADA practitioners to observe the Code of Conduct published by the British Acupuncture Council. This professional body represents professional acupuncturists in the UK. It seeks to ensure high level of safety and hygiene in all acupuncture practice.

The acupuncture needles are sterile. They are used once and then thrown away.

What should I do before or after a treatment?

You should not attend for treatment on an empty stomach. Please make sure you eat something before you have your acupuncture.

We advise you not to drink tea, coffee or anything else with caffeine just before treatment.

At the end of the relaxation period, the needles are removed. After treatment we advise you to avoid energetic activity for the rest of the day.

What should I avoid or do during a course of treatments?

We advise that you do not have any other form of acupuncture treatment elsewhere during the course of your ear acupuncture treatments. There are no other restrictions on your current lifestyle. You must carry on taking your regular medication.

What happens if I need to cancel an appointment?

If you are unable to keep any of your appointments we would like 24 hours' notice if possible. This is so we can offer your appointment to somebody else. Please telephone the Macmillan Nurse Clinician or the schedulers (contact details are provided the back page).

The Susan Murray Ear Acupuncture Clinic

The clinic is named in memory of Susan Murray. The Murray family has generously provided the funding to deliver this ear acupuncture service to people with breast cancer.



Please use this space to write any notes or questions you may have.

Further information and advice can be obtained from:

Macmillan Nurse Clinician ☎ 01622 225011
Schedulers ☎ 01622 225047
Macmillan Cancer Support ☎ 0808 808 00 00
Monday to Friday, 9.00am – 8.00pm
www.macmillan.org.uk

The following Macmillan information about complementary therapies may be of particular interest:

www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/coping/complementary-therapies/complementary-therapies-explained

MTW NHS Trust is committed to making its patient information accessible in a range of languages and formats. If you need this leaflet in another language or format please ask one of your clinical care team or the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). We will do our best to arrange this.

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust welcomes all forms of feedback from our service users. If the standard of service you have received from the Trust does not meet your expectations, we want to hear from you. Please speak with the ward manager or the nurse in charge in the first instance, or you can contact the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** on:

Telephone: ☎ 01622 224960 or ☎ 01892 632953

Email: mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net

Or visit their office at either Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells Hospital between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

You can be confident that your care will not be affected by highlighting any areas of concern or making a complaint. The Trust will retain a record of your contact, which is held separately to any medical records. If you are acting on behalf of a patient, we may need to obtain the patient's consent in order to protect patient confidentiality. More information on PALS or making a complaint can be found on the Trust's website: www.mtw.nhs.uk or pick up a leaflet from main reception.

Issue date: December 2015
Database reference: RWF-OPLF-PCS308

Review date: December 2018
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