



Health & Wellbeing Bulletin

Alternative Therapies

Alternative therapy is any healing practice that does not fall within the realm of conventional medicine. In some instances it is based on historical or cultural traditions rather than a scientific basis. They can be used to help treat a wide range of medical issues such as: gastrointestinal disorders, respiratory disease, arthritis, migraines, insomnia, and infertility problems among many other conditions.

There are many different forms of alternative therapies and outlined below are three of the most common forms used in Ireland today.

1. Homeopathy

Homeopathy is a system of medicine that uses very small doses of medicines or remedies. This is not to be confused with herbal medicine. Herbal medicine uses tinctures of botanical substances, whereas homeopathy uses ultra dilute "micro" doses made not only from plants, but minerals or any other substance found in nature.

Any plant, mineral or animal substance can be used as a remedy. The original substance is diluted in liquid repeatedly and vigorously shaken with each dilution. These very small amounts of remedies can act strongly when used properly. Also because they are ultra high dilutions, they are non toxic.

Homeopathy does not treat diseases, but treat the person who is sick. If a person has a chronic or an acute disease, all of their symptoms whether physical, mental or emotional form a whole representing a state of imbalance very specific to the individual.

When visiting a homeopathic practitioner

You will be asked to describe all of your problems in detail as well as a complete description of everything that characterizes you, especially your feelings, sensations, sensitivity, psyche and all that concerns you in terms of sleep, appetite, digestion etc.

2. Acupuncture

The traditional Chinese theory states that the body's life energy called Qi (pronounced chee) travels around the body in pathways called meridians. Illness is viewed as an energetic imbalance and is able to influence the imbalance by inserting very fine needles at certain points along these channels called Acupoints.

When visiting an acupuncturist

First consultation should take from 40 minutes to an hour; follow up visits are much shorter. A detailed case history will be taken which includes medical history as well as social habits, family history, diet and emotional status as acupuncture requires a holistic approach.

Following a detailed case history, the practitioner may take your blood pressure, look at your tongue etc. You will be asked to undress to the level necessary for the insertion of needles; points of the limb are most commonly used. Acupuncture needles are very fine and are designed to part the skin without cutting the tissues a lot of people describe the feeling as being virtually painless.

Once the needle is inserted most people feel a dull ache, tingling or feeling of heaviness or numbness around the area where the needle is.

Acupuncture is about rebalancing the body's energy and quiet often a sense of relaxation and general wellbeing results after a course of treatments.

3. Reflexologist

Often mistaken for a foot massage, a reflexologist assesses the nerve endings in the foot and hand, which are linked to every organ and system of the body and can help unblock the flow of energy in organs and rebalance entire systems. Reflexology is used to assist in the body's recovery from certain diseases and illnesses.

Reflexology is particularly useful for stress related conditions as it helps to discharge the negative effects of stress and stimulates the body's own healing.

When visiting a Reflexologist

Sessions should last from 30 minutes to an hour. Client usually sits in a reclining chair. The reflexologist uses pressure, stretch and movement to work through the methodically, technique is applied to the whole foot or hand.

You should feel relaxed at the end of a session, how long that relaxation lasts is a good indicator of the effectiveness of a session.

Issued by QUINN-healthcare Health@Work department.
Call us on **1890 907 088** or
email: **och@quinn-healthcare.com**

For more information on finding registered practitioners in your area in any of the above fields please contact the addresses below:

Irish Society of Homeopaths
www.irishhomeopathy.ie

Acupuncture Council of Ireland
www.tcmci.ie

National Register of Reflexologists
www.nationalreflexology.ie