ACUPUNCTURE
RISKS AND SAFETY
NOTICE

Is acupuncture treatment safe?

Acupuncture practised by a properly trained practitioner is a very safe therapy. Serious side effects from the treatment itself are very rare – less than one per 10,000 treatments.

Does acupuncture have side-effects?

You need to be aware that:
- drowsiness occurs after treatment in a small number of patients, and, if affected, you are advised not to drive
- minor bleeding or bruising occurs after treatment in about 3% of treatments
- pain during treatment occurs in about 1% of treatments
- existing symptoms can get worse after treatment (less than 3% of patients)
- fainting can occur in certain patients, particularly at the first treatment.

Are there any other risks from treatment?

Acupuncture is a skin piercing technique, and like all other skin piercing techniques carries a risk of cross infection. In the case of acupuncture these risks are minimised:
- by the use of single-use, sterile, disposable needles only
- by the practitioner following strict guidelines laid down by the Scottish Executive and the British Acupuncture Council and developed by leading experts in the field of skin piercing.

Is there anything I can do to reduce the risks?

You can reduce the risks yet further by ensuring that your practitioner knows anything about you which might increase the risk of treatment, such as a history of fits, faint or funny turns, a pacemaker or any other electrical implant, a bleeding disorder, use of anti-coagulant medication like warfarin, or damaged heart valves. Each of these carries a small additional risk which a well-trained practitioner can take account of in their treatment planning.