



## Ear acupuncture

This leaflet should be given out with either:  
PI 18a Ear acupuncture service for women  
or PI 18b Ear acupuncture service for men

Patient Information Series PI 18

### **Consent**

Before you start your ear acupuncture you will need to give your consent by signing a consent form.

This is a legal requirement and will be discussed with you at your first treatment.

### **Eligibility**

All LJMC services are offered free of charge to NHS patients under the care of an oncologist based at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre.

Private patients having treatment at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre may also be eligible to use our services. Please call the Helpline for details on 020 3826 2555.

### **Donations**

There is no charge for these sessions. All donations, however small, are gratefully received. They go towards our costs as the complementary therapy service is totally funded by voluntary donations.

**NHS**  
East and North Hertfordshire  
NHS Trust



## Ear acupuncture at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre

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### Introduction

This leaflet explains the ear acupuncture service at the Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre (LJMC). This service is available for women and men. Please see the information sheet PI18a (women) or PI18b (men) to ensure you are eligible for this treatment. This sheet is for your own information.

### Background

Patients often have side-effects following treatments for their cancer. These can include side-effects such as fatigue, sleep disturbances, digestive problems, hot flushes and urinary problems.

Research conducted at the LJMC has also shown that some women with early stage breast cancer experience many side-effects such as hot flushes following their treatments and that acupuncture can help them cope with these side-effects.

Research undertaken in other centres and our own pilot research project has shown that men with prostate cancer have also benefitted from this treatment.

There is a high demand for this type of treatment. When using ear acupuncture in a group setting, it is possible to treat more patients, making the treatment more widely available. Patients who are eligible will receive eight sessions of ear acupuncture on a weekly basis. The treatments take place in small groups of up to four patients.

## **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 LJMC uses a very specific form of ear acupuncture. This is a protocol, or procedure, 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 are inserted just beneath the skin and remain in place for 40 minutes, during this time the patient relaxes.

After treatment, we advise the patient to avoid energetic activity for the rest of the day. This might include activities such as strenuous exercise or heavy gardening.

'NADA practitioners' deliver this treatment. They are trained to give the NADA protocol and are members of NADA GB. They are assessed every year and have update training to maintain high standards of delivery, safety and hygiene. The LJMC is at the forefront in using the protocol to manage the side-effects of cancer treatments.

## **Who can take part in this service at the LJMC?**

If you are interested in having this treatment please see the information sheet PI18a (women) or PI 18b (men) to see if you are suitable. **This sheet is for your own information.**

## **What will happen if I am suitable for this treatment?**

If you meet all the points on the checklist you may be offered a series of eight ear acupuncture treatments.

These will be on a weekly basis in a group setting with other patients. Contact the LJMC and ask to be referred to the ear acupuncture service.

The therapist, who is a NADA practitioner, will contact you to discuss the service and arrange your appointment for an intake interview. You will be sent information and a medical questionnaire which you will be asked to complete and bring to your intake interview.

## **What happens at the intake interview?**

This interview will last about an hour. The therapist will explain the acupuncture procedure and discuss the service with you. This is a chance to ask any questions you may have.

Once it is clear that you understand the service and agree to have this treatment, your medical questionnaire will be collected. You will be asked to sign a consent form. We will also ask you to fill in a number of other questionnaires.

The therapist will then discuss the side-effects you are having and your overall physical and emotional well-being. Treatment dates will be discussed with you and will be sent in the post shortly afterwards.

You will have up to five needles placed in one ear during this interview so you can experience what they feel like.

## **Identification**

It is a legal requirement for staff to check your name and details against your therapy record every time you attend.

## **What will happen when I come for this treatment?**

You will meet the therapist who is a NADA practitioner in the LJM. They will talk with you for a few minutes privately then insert needles into your ears in the group setting. Our experience is that patients have found it supportive to be in a group. However, sometimes we can do it in a private room.

You will sit for up to 40 minutes in a restful area with other patients having ear acupuncture. We do ask you to sit quietly and relax as much as possible during this time.

At the end of the session, the therapist will remove the needles. You can then leave the clinic.

## **How many treatments will I have?**

You will have a total of eight treatments. Regular sessions give greater benefit, so please plan to complete your course of treatment in a maximum of 10 weeks.

## **How will the treatment be monitored?**

This service is part of our on-going research into the use of acupuncture in cancer care, so we may ask you to complete other questionnaires.

This data may help us to secure funding to continue and expand the service. It is important to us that you complete and return any questionnaires that we post to you.

## **Why am I being treated in a group?**

Treatment in group settings is a part of the NADA protocol. It also means we can treat more patients in the time available. There will be separate groups for women and men. Patients who have been part of the past research studies reported that they enjoyed the group sessions. Many said it helped to be with others having the same symptoms and it helped them to feel less isolated.

## **When is the service available?**

We run two to three clinics a week. The therapist will discuss your appointments with you during your intake interview.

## **What are the benefits to me?**

Our research shows that many women find this a useful way to manage their hot flushes and night sweats. They notice they have fewer and less severe flushes, as well as other improvements in their well-being.

Other research show that men also find this treatment helpful in improving their well-being.

## **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 patients enjoy the overall relaxing sensation.

## **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 GB trains NADA practitioners to observe the Code of Conduct published by the British Acupuncture Council. This professional body seeks to ensure high levels of safety and hygiene in all acupuncture practice.

The acupuncture needles used are sterile. They are used once and then disposed of safely.

### **What should I do before or after a treatment?**

You should not attend for treatment on an empty stomach. If you do not normally eat breakfast and are coming for a morning clinic, 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. Even if you are offered tea or coffee by staff in the LJM Drop-in, please say no!

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. This includes activities such as strenuous exercise or heavy gardening.

### **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.

### **Cancelling appointments**

If you are unable to keep any of your appointments we would like 24 hours notice if possible. This is so that we can give your appointment to somebody else. Please telephone the therapists on 020 3826 2553 or the LJM Helpline on 020 3826 2555.

### **Can I get ear acupuncture after I have finished treatments at the Centre?**

Please ask your therapist for details of the British Acupuncture Council. Also the Lynda Jackson Complementary Therapy Network list (Helpful Hint no. 225) has details of registered and experienced complementary therapists, including Acupuncturists.

### **Who can I contact for more information?**

If you would like more information, please drop in to the Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre or phone the centre Helpline on 020 3826 2555 (see back page of this leaflet).

Other leaflets in our complementary therapy series include:

- A patient's guide to complementary therapies at LJM (PI 16)
- A patient's guide to reflexology (PI 29)
- A patient's guide to reiki (PI 31)
- A patient's guide to aromatherapy massage (PI 38)
- A patient's guide to relaxation & breathing technique sessions (PI 39)

## Other help and support

The Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre (LJMC) offers information and support to patients and their families and is located next to Chemotherapy Suite by Gate 3. The staff at the LJMC work as part of the overall team caring for you.

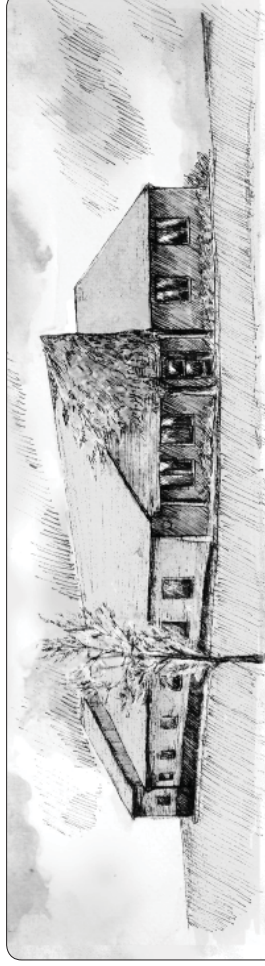
People who have cancer often say that during their illness they experience a range of emotions. Many find it to be a stressful, anxious and confusing time. Please feel free to drop in before, during and after any of your visits to Mount Vernon Cancer Centre to find out more about the LJMC services that you may find helpful.

The volunteers and healthcare professionals at the LJMC provide help, support and information in a relaxed setting to help patients cope with cancer and its treatment.

You can drop in without an appointment or call the LJMC helpline on 020 3826 2555. More information is on the back of this leaflet. LJMC services include a range of complementary therapies, counselling, relaxation sessions and financial advice. Complementary therapies and counselling are by appointments only.

This publication has been produced by the Information team at the Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre. Contributors include professionals, patients and carers from Mount Vernon Cancer Centre who have expertise and experience in the topics covered by this publication. All our publications are reviewed and updated regularly. If you would like any details of the references used to write this information please contact the LJMC on 020 3826 2555.

**Lynda Jackson**  
Macmillan Centre



# Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre

*... supporting people affected by cancer...*

- ① Drop-in centre for support and information
- ① Telephone helpline
- ① Complementary therapies\*
- ① Counselling\*
- ① Benefits advice\*
- ① Relaxation classes
- ① Look Good...Feel Better™ beauty workshops
- ① The Way Ahead headwear workshops
- ① Self-help courses

The **Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre** is situated between the Cancer Centre and Gate 3 (White Hill)

Please drop in or call to find out how we may be able to help you

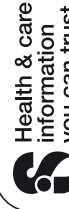
Opening hours: **Monday–Friday: 9.30am–4.30pm**

Mount Vernon Cancer Centre, Northwood, Middlesex HA6 2RN

Telephone Helpline: **020 3826 2555**

Website: **[www.ljmc.org](http://www.ljmc.org)**

\* Service only available to NHS patients under the care of an oncologist based at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre



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Certificate  
Member

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