

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CONSUMER QUESTIONS

Q. WHO CAN PERFORM ACUPUNCTURE?

A. Acupuncturists who maintain a valid license issued by the Acupuncture Board and physicians licensed by the Medical Board of California. A dentist or podiatrist licensed in California may also practice acupuncture, only within the scope of their respective licenses and if they have completed the necessary training required by their respective licensing board.

Q. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE AN ACUPUNCTURIST, CAN YOU REFER ME TO ONE?

A. No. The Acupuncture Board licenses acupuncturists. It is unable to provide referrals. You may want to check with an association. The Board maintains a list of acupuncture associations. Once you are provided the name of an acupuncturist, you may call the Acupuncture Board to verify the status of an acupuncturist, i.e., valid, delinquent, or action against the license.

Q. CAN YOU TELL ME WHETHER AN ACUPUNCTURIST HAS HAD A COMPLAINT FILED AGAINST THEM? WHAT ABOUT AN ADVERSE ACTION FILED AGAINST THEM?

A. No. Complaints and/or investigations are not subject to public disclosure. An accusation is a formal charge brought before a court against a person, stating that they are guilty of some punishable offense. If an accusation has been filed, it is subject to public disclosure. Details regarding the actual accusation filed must be requested in writing.

Q. WHAT IS AN ACUPUNCTURIST ALLOWED TO DO?

A. An acupuncturist is allowed to engage in the practice of acupuncture, electroacupuncture, perform or prescribe the use of oriental massage, acupressure, moxibustion, cupping, breathing techniques, exercise, heat, cold, magnets, nutrition, diet, herbs, plant, animal, and mineral products, and dietary supplements to promote, maintain, and restore health pursuant to **Business & Professions Code Section 4937**.

Q. WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

A. Needles are sterile, generally cause no bleeding upon entry or removal, with little or no pain being felt; however, slight bruising may be experienced on occasion. The number of treatments necessary will depend upon your condition, if your symptoms are chronic or acute and your health in general. The needles may vary in size, depending upon your condition and the course of treatment prescribed. In addition to needling your treatment may also include a variety of non-needling techniques such as moxibustion (heat), acupressure, herbal formulas, etc. One advantage of acupuncture treatment is the absence of serious side effects which may result from the use of prescription drugs.

Q. WHAT DO THE INITIALS "O.M.D." STAND FOR?

A. The initials O.M.D. stand for "Oriental Medical Doctor", this is an academic title (similar to Ph.D.). This title may only be used by those licensed acupuncturists who possess an earned doctorate degree, from a California accredited, approved and/or authorized educational institute as set forth in Section 94760 of the California Education Code. These initials must be used in conjunction with the representation that the individual is a licensed acupuncturist as set forth in

Business & Professions Code, Section 4927 and 4937, the California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Section 1399.456, and Attorney General Opinion No. 87-103.

Q. CAN AN ACUPUNCTURIST CALL THEMSELF A DOCTOR?

A. See California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Section 1399.456.

Q. DO I NEED A REFERRAL FROM MY REGULAR DOCTOR TO SEE AN ACUPUNCTURIST AND WILL MY INSURANCE COVER ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENT?

A. An acupuncturist is considered a primary care provider and a referral may or may not be required for insurance purposes. Many insurance companies do cover acupuncture treatment. For more information on insurance, please contact either your insurance company or an acupuncture association.

Q. ARE ACUPUNCTURISTS REQUIRED TO USE DISPOSABLE NEEDLES?

A. Yes. It is unprofessional conduct for an acupuncturist to use a needle more than once. **California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Section 1399.454.**

Q. CAN AN ACUPUNCTURIST GIVE INJECTIONS OF ANY KIND?

A. No. Never. Acupuncturists cannot give injections, nor can they perform acupuncture with a hypodermic needle, pursuant to **California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Section 1399.451(f).**

Q. I READ AN ADVERTISEMENT WHERE AN ACUPUNCTURIST CLAIMS THE ABILITY TO CURE MY DISEASE. IS THIS LEGAL?

A. No. Pursuant to **California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Section 1399.451(b)** it is improper for an acupuncturist to disseminate any advertising which represents in any manner that they can *cure* any type of disease, condition or symptom.

Q. DOES CALIFORNIA HAVE RECIPROCITY WITH OTHER STATES?

A. No. The Acupuncture Board does not recognize reciprocity, nor does it accept for licensure those individuals who take and pass the national examination (administered by the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine).