

Complementary health and wellbeing service

## Sleeping with ease

Sleep disturbance or 'insomnia' can be extremely common during busy, stressful or challenging periods in our life. This may result in you finding it difficult to fall asleep when you go to bed, or 'broken sleep' resulting in you waking up after a few hours, preventing you from getting a full night's sleep.

Insomnia may only last a short period for some people (a few weeks), or for others it may continue for much longer (months).

There has been some research to suggest that acupressure to a specific point on the ear (Shenmen) can be beneficial to aid sleep, regulate the nervous system and improve mental and physical health.

Acupressure consists of physically touching, and applying gentle stimulation/pressure to an acupressure point. Although acupressure can be implemented by a health professional, you can also stimulate it on your own, with or without using an acu-seed.

Acu-seeds have a small 2mm Vaccaria plant seed that is attached to a tape/plaster.

Below is a step by step guide how to do self-acupressure.



- Wash and dry hands before applying the acu-seed.
- Select one acu-seed from the pack.
- If no one can assist you at home, you will need a mirror to see where to apply the seeds.
- Using the attached picture as a reference point, apply the acuseed to the 'shady area' at the top of the ear, which is known as Shenmen. Apply the sticky side to the skin,\* and gently stimulate the point when securing in place.
- Repeat the process for the opposite ear.
- Where possible, stimulate the points (maximum 2 - 3 minutes) on both ears throughout the day, especially at night time before bed.
- To aid the potency of the acu-seeds during the stimulation phase, focus on your breathing, taking comfortable breaths in and out.
- The acu-seed can remain in position for up to a week. Gently patting the area dry following bath/shower.

\*Please discontinue use if your skin becomes sensitive to the tape.

If you require any further advice in relation to self-acupressure, please telephone the complementary health and wellbeing service on: **0161 446 8236** or **07557 592547**

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

The Christie is committed to producing high quality, evidence based information for patients. Our patient information adheres to the principles and quality statements of the Information Standard. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact **the-christie.patient.information@nhs.net**

For information and advice visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham or Salford. Opening times can vary, please check before making a special journey.



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urgent support and specialist advice  
**The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658**  
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