
ACUPUNCTURE STANDARD

**Standard of Practice for Members of the
College of Chiropractors of Ontario**

Approved by Council: September 22, 2023



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Introduction

Acupuncture is a controlled act under the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* (RHPA) – it is a procedure performed on tissue below the dermis. Controlled acts are procedures that pose a risk to patients if not performed by qualified practitioners. Members who are competent to perform acupuncture are permitted to do so under *Ontario Regulation 107/96* of the RHPA.

There are two important components to the exemption in the Regulation:

- a) acupuncture must be performed within the scope of practice of the profession, and
- b) in accordance with the standards of practice of the College.

The scope of practice for members is defined in the *Chiropody Act, 1991*, paragraph 4, as: "... the assessment of the foot and the treatment and prevention of diseases, disorders or dysfunctions of the foot by therapeutic, orthotic or palliative means."

Chiropodists and Podiatrists are reminded that the title acupuncturist or acupuncture practitioner, is restricted to members registered with the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of Ontario.

Overview of the Standards for Acupuncture

1. Scope of Practice
2. Competence
3. Maintaining Competence
4. Consent
5. Record Keeping
6. Students/Assistants/Other Health Practitioners
7. Risk Management

1. Scope of Practice

The Chiropodist or Podiatrist will perform the procedure of acupuncture within the scope of practice of the profession.

Performance Indicators

A Chiropodist or Podiatrist will:

- 1.1 Perform acupuncture safely, effectively, and ethically in accordance with all the Standards of Practice, the Code of Ethics, and relevant legislation.

- 1.2 Register with the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of Ontario if using the protected title Acupuncturist Practitioner or if performing acupuncture techniques outside the scope of practice of the profession.
- 1.3 Provide the clinical rationale for using the modality of acupuncture within the treatment plan.
- 1.4 Refer patient to other qualified practitioners of acupuncture if the patient requires treatment beyond the scope of practice of the profession or beyond the limits of the Chiroprapist or Podiatrist's knowledge, skill, and judgement.

2. Competence

The Chiroprapist or Podiatrist must have successfully completed training in acupuncture and demonstrate knowledge, skill, and judgement prior to performing acupuncture.

Performance Indicators

A Chiroprapist or Podiatrist will:

- 2.1 Have formal acupuncture training that includes instructional, theoretical, and practical components by a qualified acupuncture practitioner.

The course will include the following components:

- Introduction to traditional Chinese acupuncture
- Acupuncture points:
 - Location of the 361 classical points on the 14 meridians and the 48 extraordinary points.
 - Alphanumeric codes and names, classifications of points, direction and depth of insertion of needles, actions and indications of the commonly used points selected for basic training.
- Applications of acupuncture in modern Western medicine:
 - Principal clinical conditions in which acupuncture has been shown to be beneficial.
 - Selection of patients and evaluation of progress/benefit.
 - Planning of treatment, selection of points and methods of needle manipulation, and the use of medication or other forms of therapy concurrently with acupuncture.
- Guidelines on infection control and safety procedures.
- Treatment techniques including general principles and for specific clinical conditions.

- 2.2 Provide verifiable documentation of the completion of an educational program in acupuncture upon request.
- 2.3 Assess patient(s) as candidates for acupuncture based on knowledge of current evidence and effectiveness of the acupuncture treatment.
- 2.4 Understand the indications, contraindications, benefits, and limitations of acupuncture.
- 2.5 Refrain from performing any acupuncture technique that is outside the Chiroprapist or Podiatrist's knowledge, training, skills, and abilities.

3. Maintaining Competence

The Chiroprapist or Podiatrist will maintain competence by engaging in ongoing acupuncture specific learning activities.

Performance Indicators

A Chiroprapist or Podiatrist will:

- 3.1 Participate in professional development activities that ensure the maintenance of knowledge, skills, judgement, and training to perform acupuncture safely and effectively. Examples include recognized acupuncture education and training programs, workshops, conferences, and learning modules.

4. Consent

The Chiroprapist or Podiatrist will ensure that informed and ongoing consent is obtained from the patient to perform acupuncture, in accordance with the standards.

Performance Indicators

A Chiroprapist or Podiatrist will:

- 4.1 Obtain informed consent for acupuncture as outlined in the standards, ensuring the patient understands that the modality of acupuncture is within the Chiroprapist or Podiatrist's scope of practice and that the patient understands:
 - a) The nature of the proposed procedure
 - b) The benefits, risks, limitations, and side-effects of acupuncture
 - c) Alternative treatments
 - d) The option of the patient to withdraw consent at any time during the process

4.2 Respect the patient's choice not to proceed with acupuncture; and offer alternative treatment options.

5. Record Keeping

The Chiroprapist or Podiatrist will document the performance of acupuncture in accordance with the Records standard.

Performance Indicators

A Chiroprapist or Podiatrist will:

5.1 Maintain patient records as outlined in the Records standard.

5.2 Document details about the performance of acupuncture (i.e. needle points used, length of needle, depth, direction, retention time, stimulation or manipulation) and the outcome and effectiveness of the procedure.

6. Students/Assistants/Other Health Practitioners

The Chiroprapist or Podiatrist will not delegate or assign any part of the controlled act pertaining to acupuncture.

Performance Indicators

A Chiroprapist or Podiatrist will:

6.1 Not delegate or assign any part of acupuncture to students, assistants, or any other health practitioner.

7. Risk Management

The Chiroprapist or Podiatrist will be responsible for minimizing the risks to the patient, self, and others associated with the performance of acupuncture before, during, and after the procedure.

Performance Indicators

A Chiroprapist or Podiatrist will:

7.1 Comply with the standards for Infection Prevention and Control:

- Maintain required standards of cleanliness, skin disinfection technique, needling technique.

- Ensure needles used for treatment are single-use, pre-packaged, pre-sterilized, unexpired, manufactured for use in acupuncture, intended for the specific kind of acupuncture being performed, and disposed of properly at the end of the treatment.
- Ensure the number of needles inserted into the patient matches the number of needles removed from the patient.

7.2 Establish policies and implement precautions necessary to prevent adverse events or injury when performing acupuncture.

7.3 Recognize and manage adverse reactions or complications during, or because of, acupuncture treatment.

7.4 Implement a risk management process to assist with tracking incidents, identifying trends, to inform quality improvement processes.

Related College Documents

1. [Records Standard](#)
2. [Patient Relations Standard](#)
3. [Assignment, Orders and Delegation Policy](#)
4. [Infection Prevention and Control](#)

References

1. [*Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991*](#)
2. College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario. (2020). [Standards for Acupuncture](#)
3. [Ontario Regulation 107/96, Controlled Acts \(1991\)](#)