

# Acu News

"Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food" - Hippocrates

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## Acupuncture is Even Safer for Kids than Study Finds

Acupuncture has been safely used to treat a wide variety health problems in babies, toddlers and children for thousands of years. It is a safe, natural and effective treatment that works with the body and has very few adverse effects. As a pediatric acupuncturist I can assure you acupuncture is completely



safe for kids and now there is current research to support this assertion! The first systematic review study of pediatric acupuncture safety was published in the December 2011 issue of the journal Pediatrics. It confirms that acupuncture is safe for kids when performed by a qualified practitioner.

I believe acupuncture for kids is even safer than the study findings due to the rigorous clinical training, safety standards and certifications that modern American acupuncturists go through before becoming licensed. After reviewing the study I found that these standards were not reflected in the systematic review because much of the data for the review came out of international studies. The serious adverse events reported were mostly caused by unqualified practitioners in other countries and were due to gross incompetence.

Here are six reasons why I think acupuncture by qualified practitioners is safer for kids than the recent study findings:

- Hair-fine Pediatric Acupuncture Needle
- Only single-use sterile disposable needles are used, thus infections from needles are extremely rare!
- The needles are hair-fine, virtually painless, and are inserted superficially into the skin so there is zero risk of puncturing a lung or other vital organ.
- Acupuncture needles are not always used for treatment. There are several different non-needle painless ways to stimulate the acupoints that have similar therapeutic effects as acupuncture. Non-needle methods do not penetrate the skin so there is zero chance of any adverse reaction.
- In babies and toddlers non-needle methods are generally used to stimulate acupoints. Thus, fear and crying are extremely rare.
- In kids under age 8, acupuncture needles are not retained in the body. The needles are swiftly tapped in and immediately taken out. Children only need to sit still for a few seconds at a time during the treatment.

- In kids over age 8, they can generally sit still for 10 – 20 minutes with the needles in, but unlike adults the needles are smaller and inserted superficially minimizing any serious risk to the child.

In my experience the most common adverse reaction is a mild and brief discomfort (about 1 second) during insertion of the needle. Rarely, mild adverse reactions such as temporary bruising or swelling at the needle site occur but these are uncommon due to the special techniques used in pediatrics. In the eleven years I've been involved in acupuncture never has a single pediatric or adult patient caught an infection from needle insertion, nor have I seen or any serious adverse reactions. They do happen, but are extremely rare and very unlikely if the practitioner you choose is licensed and has special training in pediatrics.



Contributing writer: **Robin Green, L.Ac. MTCM**



I came to acupuncture because I was in pain and desperate for relief (sound familiar?). In college I had chronic, persistent headaches and after a year of suffering, and popping more Advil than I care to admit, I went on a search to cure myself naturally. I tried many different modalities to treat my headaches and, while I did get temporary relief from chiropractic and massage, the pain would come right back. As a last resort, I decided to give acupuncture a try and as they say... the rest is history.

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