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Does UnitedHealthcare Cover Acupuncture?

June 16, 2022

In this article...

- UnitedHealthcare acupuncture coverage varies based on the individual Medicare Advantage plan you have. Learn when and how members can access this treatment through their Medicare health plans.



UnitedHealthcare acupuncture coverage allows eligible members to access this type of treatment. A mainstay of traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture involves inserting thin needles into specific pressure points on the body to treat **chronic pain and other health conditions** ([/conditions/overview](#)).

Acupuncture has been used in Asia for thousands of years. While researchers don't know exactly how the treatment works, many believe it stimulates chemicals in the brain that reduce pain.

Does UnitedHealthcare Cover Acupuncture?

UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage plans **cover acupuncture** (<https://www.uhcprovider.com/content/dam/provider/docs/public/policies/medadv-guidelines/a/acupuncture.pdf>) only for chronic lower back pain, defined as pain lasting at least 12 weeks.

The pain must not result from pregnancy, surgery or another health condition. Members who meet the criteria can receive coverage for up to 12 visits in 90 days. If the treatment improves the person's back pain, the company will cover another eight acupuncture sessions for a total limit of 20 in 12 months.

Visit [MedicareAdvantage.com](https://www.medicareadvantage.com) to find out if a UnitedHealthcare plan available in your area covers acupuncture.

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What Are the Benefits of Acupuncture?

According to the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, research supports the effectiveness of **acupuncture to treat chronic pain** (<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/acupuncture-in-depth>). The agency says the most robust evidence exists to show that acupuncture can alleviate headache, knee pain, back pain and pain associated with osteoarthritis.

Other traditional uses of acupuncture include helping with smoking cessation, reducing nausea and other symptoms associated with cancer treatment, and alleviating pain related to fibromyalgia, childbirth, menstrual cramps, respiratory disorders, and muscle sprains and strains.

However, the NCCIH notes that scientists need further research to determine the effects of acupuncture on these conditions.

Does UnitedHealthcare Cover Other Types of Alternative Medicine?

Members of UnitedHealthcare do not receive coverage for other complementary and alternative medicine treatments. However, individuals who have this type of insurance through an employer may have access to **supplemental coverage** (<https://www.uhcprovider.com/content/dam/provider/docs/public/policies/signaturevalue-bip/complementary-alternative-medicine-ca.pdf>) of these services through their group health plans.

Find out if a UnitedHealthcare AARP Medicare Advantage plan available where you live covers acupuncture by comparing your local plan options online or calling to get help from a licensed insurance agent.

Visit MedicareAdvantage.com (https://www.medicareadvantage.com/?afid=522871&tfn=ODg4LTg3Ni01NzMx&utm_source=HelpAdvisor&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=uhc-acupuncture&subID=uhc-acupuncture)

Visit MedicareAdvantage.com to compare multiple Medicare Advantage plans, side by side.

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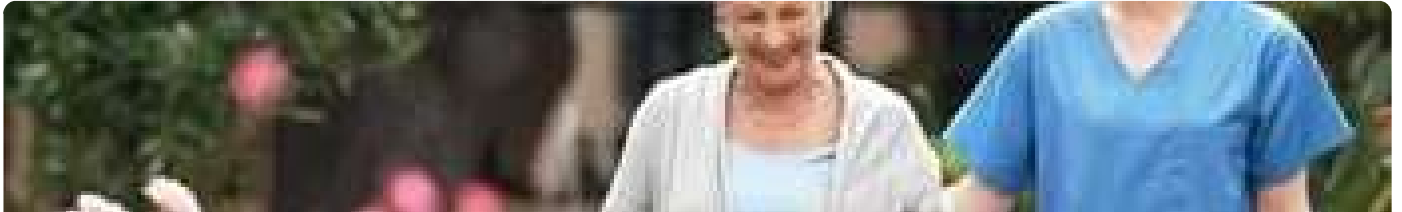
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