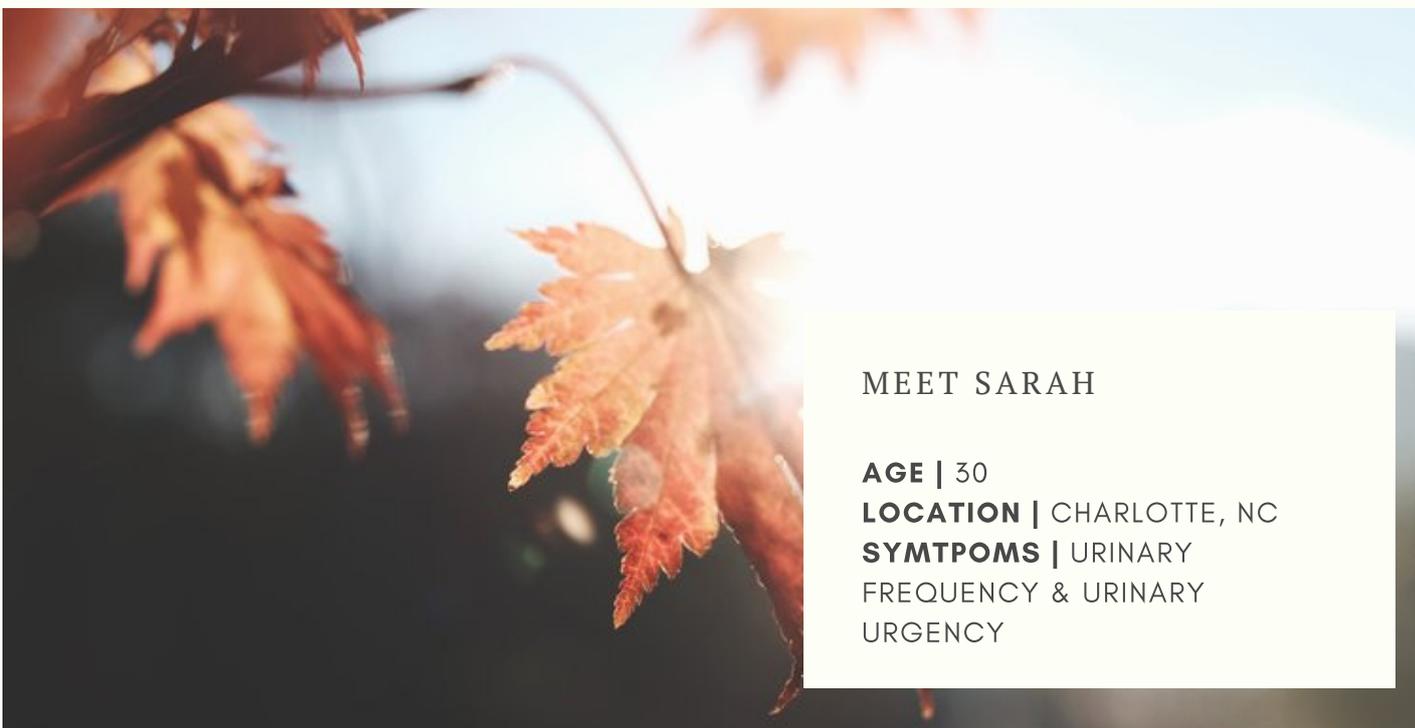


ACUPUNCTURE & OVERACTIVE BLADDER

Overactive bladder patient finds relief with acupuncture therapy



MEET SARAH

AGE | 30

LOCATION | CHARLOTTE, NC

SYMPTOMS | URINARY
FREQUENCY & URINARY
URGENCY

"As many as 30% of men and 40% of women in the United States live with OAB symptoms."

Urology Care Foundation

"There was an incident," starts Sarah Henderson, an acupuncture patient being treated for overactive bladder (OAB). "I was in a three-hour-long meeting at a work conference with several presenters and no bathroom breaks. Because I was seated in the front row, I couldn't discreetly sneak out. By the time the session ended, I took off running. I got all the way to the ladies' room door but didn't make it to the stall in time."

"Luckily, no one else was around," continues Sarah. "But it was still so upsetting – I was embarrassed and frustrated. I sat in the stall and cried. After a few minutes, I threw away my incredibly expensive pair of Spanx-brand slip shorts and hurried up to my hotel room to change before the next session."

ACUPTUNCTURE & OVERACTIVE BLADDER

“That’s when I decided to talk to someone about overactive bladder,” Sarah sums up.

OAB is a bladder condition defined by a group of urinary symptoms related to the control and frequency of urination. The Urology Care Foundation estimates that about 33 million Americans have OAB. “As many as 30% of men and 40% of women in the United States live with OAB symptoms. But the real number of people with OAB is most likely much larger. That’s because many people living with OAB don’t ask for help. [They’re] embarrassed.”

The most common symptom of OAB is a sudden urge to urinate that you can’t control. Some people leak urine when they feel the urge, which is called “incontinence.” Another common OAB symptom is frequency: having to go to the bathroom many times during the day and night.

“I knew I had an urgency problem. I had no idea I had a frequency problem,” says Sarah. “When I told my doctor how many bathroom visits I typically made in a day – often times more than 20 – she was floored. I just thought that was how often everybody went.” According to Keri Peterson, M.D., internal medicine physician, who was interviewed by Women’s Health, “On average, people go about six to seven times per day.”

“The symptoms didn’t hit me all at once. The urgency issue started out gradually then progressed over the course of about 10 – 12 months. And I can’t even estimate how long the frequency had been going on. Years, probably,” recalls Sarah. “I know it sounds silly, but I thought if I ignored it, maybe it would fix itself. Basically, I didn’t think it was a big deal until it was. And by then, it was a very big deal.”

“The day I got back from my work conference, I started making calls. When no urologist in the greater Charlotte area could see me in sooner than four weeks, I decided to take matters into my own hands and started researching alternative remedies,” says Sarah. “I ran across a study published in the British Journal of Urology that offers acupuncture as a natural treatment option for OAB. The results looked too good to be true.”

In the study, Acupuncture in the Treatment of Bladder Instability, 20 patients with OAB symptoms received one 30-minute acupuncture session per week for a total of 10 weeks. The treatment sessions targeted acupuncture points SP6 (tibial nerve), CV4 (RN4) (lower abdomen), and KI3 (inner side of the ankle). The results found 77% of patients symptomatically cured.

“The first time I went to Two Trees Acupuncture, I had no idea what to expect,” says Sarah. “I filled out a few forms, circling every symptom related to urination, and met with David Bonilla.”

“David is a rockstar,” continues Sarah. “I was ridiculously embarrassed and uncomfortable going into the session, but David’s kindness and level of professionalism really helped ease that anxiety. I felt like I was in a safe space.”

In that initial consultation, Sarah and David mapped out what their next 10 weeks would look like. Every Friday during lunch, Sarah would go to Two Trees Acupuncture for a 25-minute session of acupuncture plus electrical stimulation (at 1 Hz). The points used were Kidney 3 and 7, Spleen 6, and Ren 6. Electrical stimulation was applied to both legs at Kidney 7 and Spleen 6 to stimulate the nerves adjacent to the acupuncture points, located near the tibial nerve. The tibial nerve travels up to and connects with other nerves that branch out from what is called the “sacral nerve plexus,” which, simply put, is a bundle of nerves near the sacrum that help regulate bladder function. The anti-spasmodic effect of using 1 Hz electrical stimulation promotes a calmer, less active bladder.

"I didn't think [my OAB] was a big deal until it was. And by then, it was a very big deal."

Sarah Henderson

ACUPTUNCTURE & OVERACTIVE BLADDER

“I was really excited to start Sarah on this treatment path because we [at Two Trees Acupuncture] had a chance to make a direct impact on a patient’s quality of life in a big way,” says David. “I got into the field of acupuncture because I wanted to help people, and I found that Chinese medicine was a safe, effective, and fascinating way to do that. Sarah’s success is proof positive of that.”

By her own calculations, Sarah’s frequency has decreased by 60%. “I’ll say on an average day, I visited the bathroom 20 times. Since I started going to Two Trees Acupuncture, I’ve been keeping a journal and have been watching the numbers gradually decrease since that first session. I had my tenth and final session two weeks ago, and since then, my number of bathroom visits per day has been holding steady at eight.” On top of that, the symptoms related to urgency have been almost completely eradicated. “David explained that stimulating the tibial nerve was essentially rewiring the communication between my bladder and my brain – that my bladder was telling my brain it needed to go to the bathroom, but the communication was delayed. So by the time the signal got to my brain, I may have already needed to go for 20 or 30 minutes. Since wrapping up my treatment, I haven’t had a single instance where I felt that sense of urgency.”

Sarah continues, “My quality of life has improved dramatically. I don’t have to plan my errands around knowing where the nearest bathroom is. I can take my dog for longer than a 45-minute walk without having to rush at the end to get back home to the bathroom. I can sit through a three-hour-long meeting without having to fear the worst.”

"My number of bathroom visits went from 20 per day to now holding steady at eight."

Sarah Henderson



About Two Trees Acupuncture

Two Trees Acupuncture specializes in acupuncture, Chinese herbology, oriental nutrition therapy, and tui na Chinese medical massage. Our hope is to support the health and wellbeing of our Charlotte community. We aim to treat not only the symptoms, but to treat the whole person by focusing on the root cause for imbalances in the body.

With thousands of years of documented practice, Chinese medicine is the second largest medical system in the world. It is a useful complementary therapy alongside many other medical treatments, as well as being able to provide effective stand-alone treatments for a variety of conditions. It is a gentle, safe system of medicine that has treated billions of people during the past 2500 years. With ancient wisdom blended together with modern clinical experience, Chinese medicine is a beautifully constructed antidote to many of the common ailments we face in the 21st Century.



Case Study References

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