

# Smokers turn to acupuncture in last effort to kick their habits

By **Kalamazoo Gazette staff**

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Jill McLane Baker | Kalamazoo Gazette

Paul Enright, a board-certified acupuncturist with Borgess Integrative Medicine, demonstrates acupuncture treatments for smoking cessation, using colon hydrotherapist Maria Chojnowski. As part of the smoking-cessation treatments, Enright inserts small needles in Chojnowski's ear, focusing on five points there, and on points on her feet.

**By Jennifer Wezensky | Special to the Kalamazoo Gazette**

**KALAMAZOO** — Tom Hite, of Paw Paw, started smoking in 1977. He tried to quit several times, and at one point he stopped smoking for an entire year.

But his sedentary job as a truck driver led him to resume smoking about two packs a day, he said.

He tried nicotine patches to no avail. His daughter recommended acupuncture. He was skeptical but willing to try anything.

Since two visits to receive acupuncture at Springwood Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, on West Main Street in Kalamazoo, almost a year ago, he hasn't touched a cigarette.

"I am not tempted at all, even though my wife still smokes," Hite said. "I don't really like to be around it. I don't even think about smoking. I feel so good. I have more energy. I just feel totally better."

Hite said he was spending about \$10 a day on cigarettes. The two acupuncture appointments cost \$120 — \$60 for each treatment — only 12 days' worth of cigarettes.

**WHERE TO GET HELP**

**Springwood Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine**, 5945 W. Main St., Suite 100. (269) 353-4833 or [www.springwoodacupuncture.com](http://www.springwoodacupuncture.com).

**Borgess Integrative Medicine**, 3025 Gul Road, Kalamazoo. (269) 552-2282 or [www.borgess.com](http://www.borgess.com).

Other area acupuncturists are listed in the Yellow Pages and can also be found online by going to:

[www.tinyurl.com/KzooWellness](http://www.tinyurl.com/KzooWellness)

[www.tinyurl.com/LocAcup](http://www.tinyurl.com/LocAcup)

**More information**  
[www.acupuncture.com](http://www.acupuncture.com)

Springwood acupuncturist Charles R. Adams, whom Hite visited, said that he has about an 85 percent success rate in smoking cessation through acupuncture. He emphasized that acupuncture helps relieve cravings but doesn't change habits. Ex-smokers may need to change their routines that used to involve smoking, such as having a morning cup of coffee or drinking alcohol.

### **How it works**

Adams said that he treats smokers by inserting extremely small sterile needles in the ears, hands and feet and applying mild electrical stimulation to two points in the ears.

"It is designed to get the brain to generate naturally occurring chemistry that fills the receptor site accustomed to being filled with nicotine," he said. "It allows people to get over the craving, to take the edge off."

### **Skepticism all for naught**

For most people, two sessions close together is very effective, he said.

Terry Forrister, 42, of Coldwater, smoked about a pack a day for 23 years. But he worried about future health problems that could be caused by smoking. Before he received acupuncture, he had tried quitting many times

using patches and going “cold turkey.”

Then someone he knew, Angie Brown, director of Borgess Integrative Medicine, recommended he get acupuncture at her facility.

“I was skeptical,” he said. “I’ve tried many things many times, all unsuccessfully.”

In March, he went to Borgess for two acupuncture sessions two days apart. He smoked after the first session, but after the second session he quit. Now he’s a believer.

“To go from more than a pack a day to cold turkey is just amazing,” he said. “I’d never had the willpower before.”

Paul Enright, the only acupuncturist at Borgess Integrative Medicine, said that when he treats a patient for smoking cessation, he focuses on points in the ear that control addictions. Enright declined to discuss his success rate.

He sees the biggest surge in patients looking for smoking cessation at the start of the year and in November during the Great American Smokeout, planned and publicized by the American Cancer Society.

Enright, who has a master’s degree from the Midwest College for Oriental Medicine in Chicago, said that acupuncture is becoming more accepted by mainstream medicine, although many people consider it a “last-ditch effort.”

“I tell my patients to be receptive to the possibility that it might help,” he said. “Just open yourself up to the possibilities.”