

## THE GENERAL OSTEOPATHIC COUNCIL (GOSc)

The GOSc regulates, promotes and develops the profession of osteopathy, maintaining a **Statutory Register** of those entitled to practise osteopathy.

Only practitioners meeting the highest standards of safety and competency are eligible for registration.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact the General Osteopathic Council for further information about osteopaths and osteopathic practice, including:

- A list of osteopaths in your area
- The *Statutory Register of Osteopaths*
- Information leaflets



**General Osteopathic Council  
Osteopathy House  
176 Tower Bridge Road  
London SE1 3LU**

**Tel: 020 7357 6655  
Fax: 020 7357 0011  
E: [info@osteopathy.org.uk](mailto:info@osteopathy.org.uk)**

**[www.osteopathy.org.uk](http://www.osteopathy.org.uk)**



GENERAL OSTEOPATHIC COUNCIL



GENERAL OSTEOPATHIC COUNCIL

**OSTEOPATHY**  
*in General Practice*

**A referral guide for  
medical practitioners**

## WHAT IS OSTEOPATHY?

Osteopathy focuses on the diagnosis, treatment, prevention and rehabilitation primarily of musculoskeletal disorders.

Using many of the diagnostic procedures applied in conventional medical assessment, osteopaths seek to restore the optimal functioning of the body and aid its intrinsic ability to heal.

Following a detailed case history and examination, treatment is based on mobilising and manipulative techniques, reinforced by guidance on diet and exercise.

## TRAINING

At undergraduate level, a four to five-year BSc Honours degree programme with extensive clinical training from the outset.

Osteopaths are **committed to lifelong learning** through a system of mandatory Continuing Professional Development.

## CAN I REFER MY PATIENTS TO AN OSTEOPATH?

Yes – osteopaths are statutorily regulated health professionals and form an integral part of primary care teams.

GPs can safely refer patients to an osteopath – guidelines are published by the General Medical Council and British Medical Association<sup>1 2</sup>.

Increasingly, osteopaths are working alongside GPs, providing treatment both privately and through the NHS.

## WHAT CONDITIONS ARE APPROPRIATE FOR REFERRAL?

A wide range of musculoskeletal disorders including back, neck and shoulder pain, headaches, and sport and work-related injuries respond especially well to osteopathic treatment.

Other commonly treated conditions include pregnancy care, migraine, asthma, arthritic pain, digestive disorders and infantile colic.

---

<sup>1</sup> Good Medical Practice: General Medical Council, 2001

<sup>2</sup> Referrals to complementary therapists. Guidance for GPs: General Practitioners' Committee, British Medical Association, 1999

## WHY REFER TO AN OSTEOPATH?

Osteopathy offers a **timely, cost-effective healthcare** service through:

- Prevention
- Early intervention
- Active recovery
- Enhancing quality of life

There are currently 3,700 osteopaths registered in the UK, seeing an estimated 25,000 patients a day.

A recent MRC trial comparing treatment options for lower back pain (UK BEAM Trial), found that spinal manipulation, added to GP care, is clinically effective and the most cost-efficient option for patients in the UK<sup>3</sup>.

## HOW DO I FIND AN OSTEOPATH?

The UK *Statutory Register of Osteopaths* is available online at: [www.osteopathy.org.uk](http://www.osteopathy.org.uk) or **tel: 020 7357 6655**.

Search the Register or call us to find an osteopath in your area.

---

<sup>3</sup> UK Back pain Exercise And Manipulation (UK BEAM) trial, Medical Research Council, 2004