

Belfast Community Acupuncture - Welcome and information for new clients

A warm welcome to Belfast Community Acupuncture! We are the first '**Community Multi-bed Clinic**' in Northern Ireland offering professional acupuncture for pain, stress and illness at affordable rates. **Please note our 'Sliding Scale' (choose-what-you-can-afford-each-week) fees for acupuncture of £18-35 (excludes massage).** Our aim is to deliver high quality treatments at the cheapest possible price. Our small private clinic is not funded and can only thrive on being busy, so please try to give as much notice as you can if you need to change an appointment. **Cancellation Policy: Strictly £15 for missed appointments (or less than 24 hours notice).** We accept cash or cheques, sorry no cards at present.

Community Multi-bed clinics deliver acupuncture to a number of clients in one room, using privacy screens and blankets. To the best of our ability we will stagger appointments and use the available space to offer the maximum privacy. If you wish to return to a more private space at any stage to discuss a private matter, please ask your practitioner.

What can you expect from acupuncture? For your first treatment you will discuss your case in detail. Your practitioner will ask many questions, and will usually look at your tongue and assess the pulse. In some musculoskeletal problems the consultation may be shorter but there may be more time spent on a physical exam. Follow up treatments will typically last 45 minutes to one hour.

Acupuncture stimulates the body's own repair mechanisms eg improving circulation to aid local tissue healing or pain relief through the nervous system or endogenous opioids. The aim is to achieve mild to moderate relief of symptoms following the first treatment improving over a few weeks of treatment, depending upon how long you've had those symptoms. Sometimes a response takes a few weeks. If no response is achieved by four weeks we would question the value of continuing. We will also provide Chinese Medicine specific advice, or western self-care advice according to our individual training. Self-care can be very important, and the need to manage aggravating factors cannot be overstated.

At your treatment you can expect a deeply relaxing time, which you can use to quietly think, meditate, sleep or talk if you wish. With chronic health problems, realistic goals are important so your treatments should be an open dialogue with your practitioner, 'mutually tuning' your goals within the scope and limitations of acupuncture therapy.

What to do before and after your treatment

You should eat something light before your appointment but not arrive full. It can be helpful to list your medications, and inform us of anything you feel we should know (allergies, infections, clotting disorders, pacemaker, history of seizures, or fainting). There is no reason not to resume normal activities after acupuncture, but we recommend avoiding any activity that might exacerbate your condition. Please ask if in doubt.

Do I need to visit my GP as well? Qualified medical advice should always be sought if you have symptoms which cause you concern. **There is no substitute for proper medical tests** to rule out a potentially serious condition.

Are there any side effects? Mary and Emma are fully trained and professionally registered practitioners. In properly trained hands, acupuncture is a safe therapy with minimal side effects. Sometimes a small bruise or a minimal amount of temporary blood spotting can occur afterwards. Cupping is a popular, pleasant and painless experience but can cause a little bruising which can last a couple of days. Please bear this in mind if you have social plans! Fainting is a rare occurrence but occasionally affects a small number of people with pre-existing low blood pressure. Some people experience drowsiness after treatment. Please bear this in mind if you are driving yourself. Occasionally, symptoms temporarily worsen after treatment but it is usually a sign that you are responding to treatment and should progress to a more desirable outcome within a few days. **Acupuncture should stimulate a tolerable sensation called “*deqi*”** (mild soreness, heaviness or numbness which may propagate along the ‘channel’) and this subsides over time. Particularly tense tender spots (*ashi points, or trigger points*) may produce a strong *deqi* also called a ‘twitch response’. This is a sign that the treatment has been very effective at releasing muscle tension and is nothing to worry about. **‘Dosage’ may be adjusted during your treatment or during subsequent visits**, either to improve response or to avoid a reoccurrence of any previous aggravation. **Your feedback is an invaluable part of this process, so please let us know as much as you can so that we can tailor your treatment.**

There are many more answers to frequently asked questions on our [website](#) and please don't hesitate to ask your practitioner anything.

Best wishes from Emma and Mary

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