

Belfast Community Acupuncture – Welcome and information for new clients

A warm welcome to Belfast Community Acupuncture! We are a local, privately run acupuncture clinic emphasizing professional, ethical, evidence-informed treatments for pain, stress and chronic illness. We began life as a 'community clinic' offering cheaper appointments in a no-frills, multi-bed shared space. However since the pandemic we offer 1-2-1 appointments only. This handout informs you what to expect and of any risks or side effects before you consent to treatment.

What can you expect from acupuncture? For your first treatment you will have the chance to discuss your health concerns in detail, and agree some treatment goals. Generally speaking, we aim to help achieve mild to moderate relief of symptoms following a first treatment, improving over a few weeks of treatment depending upon how long you've had those symptoms. Sometimes it takes a few weeks to see gains, but if no improvement has occurred within four sessions we would question the value of continuing. We may discuss a Chinese Medicine perspective, or current western clinical research according to our individual training. Recovering from ill health is a challenging journey with ups and downs, and while some people respond very quickly it is normal to expect flare-ups along the way, whether you are using acupuncture or any other modality. We aim to help you become more resilient against these flare-ups. With chronic health problems, realistic goals are important so your treatments should be an ongoing dialogue with your practitioner, 'mutually tuning' your goals within the scope and limitations of acupuncture therapy. Your priorities will naturally change so please keep this conversation going!

Should you contact your GP? 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.

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 inform us of anything you feel we should know (medications, 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.

FEES: 1-2-1 appointments are available as follows:

- Acupuncture (1hr appointment) £40 – includes initial consultation, follow-up consultation, adjunct treatments e.g. cupping, electro-acupuncture, moxibustion,
- Cupping only (30 minute appointment) £25 (follow-up appointments only*)
- Auricular (ear) acupuncture (30 minutes) £25 (follow-up appointments only*)

**We recommend booking a one-hour appointment at £40 for your first visit*

CANCELLATION POLICY - To sustain the lowest fees possible, a STRICT CANCELLATION FEE of **£20** applies to cancellations of **less than 24 hrs** and no shows. Vouchers are treated as “redeemed” from 24 hours prior to the booking.

ARRIVING FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT:

1. **Arriving at clinic:** Try to arrive at the time of your appointment, no more than 5 minutes early. We have allocated extra time for cleaning and disinfecting the treatment area

between clients, but we advise not using the waiting area at the current time.

2. **Masks:** Update January 2023. Masks are now optional, but appreciated particularly when circulating virus levels are high.
3. **Hygiene:** Please take advantage of hand sanitizing bottles placed at strategic locations in the building. You are invited to bring your own water bottle.

What Are The Risks/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. In a survey of 9408 patients in the U.K., 10.7% of respondents reported adverse events, which most commonly included post-treatment tiredness/exhaustion, headaches, temporary needling pain or bruising (Macpherson et al., 2004)¹. Cupping may cause temporary marking, which can last a couple of days. Some individuals report a temporary aggravation of symptoms immediately following treatment, but this will not last. Subsequent treatments can be adjusted to make a reoccurrence less likely. Indeed it can be a positive sign, if it quickly progresses to a better outcome. If you experience a flare up at a later stage, or another unrelated symptom, then this unlikely to be triggered by acupuncture. Acupuncture should be *painless* but please help us make your experience enjoyable by letting us know if you are uncomfortable. Acupuncture should however stimulate a tolerable sensation called “*deqi*” where the local area might for example feel heavy, or achy. Particularly tense, tender spots (*ashi points, or trigger points*) may produce a strong *deqi* also called a ‘twitch response’. This is considered part of the treatment, and is nothing to worry about. ‘Dose’ (number of needles, intensity of *deqi* sensations, adding electro-

¹ [1] Macpherson, H., Scullion, A., Thomas, K. J., & Walters, S. (2004). Patient reports of adverse events associated with acupuncture treatment: a prospective national survey. *Quality & Safety in Health Care*, 13(5), 349–355. <https://doi.org/10.1136/qhc.13.5.349>

stimulation) will be adjusted during your treatment or during subsequent visits to ensure it is comfortable, or to improve response, or to avoid a reoccurrence of any previous aggravation. It is therefore essential that you tell us how you feel during and after treatment so that we can tailor the treatment to suit you as an individual person.

Feel free to ask us anything else, otherwise we look forward to welcoming you.

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www.belfastcommunityacupuncture.com

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