

Treatment during Covid-19

This is a supporting document to our treatment during Covid-19 consent form and details the Clinic's approach and considerations to treatment during these times. It explains what considerations and precautions we need clients of the Clinic to take, together with what to expect when attending the Clinic.

OUR CLINIC PROTOCOL

We want to reassure you that at the Belfast Chiropractic Clinic & Complementary Therapies we have taken the necessary precautions to protect both our clients and staff to minimise the risk of transmission of Covid-19. We will be using personal protective equipment and we have social distancing, cleaning, and hygiene protocols in place. Clients will be instructed on hand washing, sanitising, and optimal social distancing on entering and exiting the Clinic. We also expect our clients to be equally proactive in their duty of care to self protect and to wash/sanitise before and after each essential visit to the Clinic. We will be reviewing these protocols daily.

PERSONAL RISK CONSIDERATION

In re-opening our Clinic, we need to prioritise those clients who have the greatest need for essential care whilst minimising the risk of transmission as per the guidance from the Government and our professional bodies. Therefore, we rely on each client to carefully consider how essential their need for treatment/session is. In the "[Need for treatment](#)" section we provide some guidance on what to consider.

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Summary

The priority of our Clinic is serving our clients to the best of our ability. Balancing that with our collective need to be careful surrounding Covid-19, means that we need to take measures, as per professional guidelines, to cope with infection control. One aspect is reducing the amount of people in the Clinic at one time, which allows time to clean the bench and surfaces between clients and minimises the risk of unnecessary collection of people at one time or around the Clinic.

Should you be Treated?

Need for treatment

We have been advised by the British Chiropractic Association that we may hold face-to-face (F2F) consultations only in the case of an urgent clinical need. We are defining “Urgent Clinical Need” through a patient centred approach, as we respect that someone’s need for treatment cannot be arbitrarily defined in a tick box exercise. We understand that patients in acute pain are not the only ones in urgent need of treatment, as there are many physical, mental and emotional adverse effects that clients may be experiencing that would make an appointment essential for their overall health and wellbeing. Therefore, we will engage with you to assist your judgement in deciding if treatment is urgent in each individual case. Here are a few pointers to help guide you with the decision-making process.

- ✚ Symptoms that are getting worse or not responding to simple painkillers, rest, exercises, hot/cold.
- ✚ Symptoms which include pins and needles (anywhere), muscular weakness, dizziness, numbness, loss of sensation or muscle strength or mobility
- ✚ If you develop difficulty urinating or pooping,
- ✚ Symptoms which prevent you from sleeping or doing your normal day-to-day tasks or prevent you from carrying out your daily work
- ✚ Increasing pain and discomfort
- ✚ Worsening of symptoms that do not respond to advised self-management (as per Telehealth call, professional guidance, or recommended medication)
- ✚ Pain is having a significant impact on your physical, emotional, and psychological well being
- ✚ Symptoms that go untreated will otherwise require a F2F with another healthcare professional (such a GP, A&E etc)

Child specific urgency

We understand that the urgent need for treatment of a baby, child or young person needs to be defined differently than for that of an adult. Physical pain is only one aspect to be considered. The relationship between treatment and their development and all-round wellbeing must also be considered. Especially considering the changes your child is facing such as home-schooling and disruption to boundaries and routine, or for young babies and children where time is of a more critical nature in development. Some examples to consider:

- ✚ Physical pain such as headaches
- ✚ Feeding issues
- ✚ Sleeping issues
- ✚ Toilet-ing issues
- ✚ Stress and/or anxiety

Vulnerable Person Definition

Definition by the [NHS](#). HIGH RISK people have been advised to stay home and avoid face-to-face (F2F) contact until the end of June. This shielded status means we are sorry to say we cannot treat you at this time. People at MODERATE RISK have been advised to follow social distancing advice, so it is your prerogative whether you will come in for F2F treatment (under strict precautions of self-protection), or you can avail of our telehealth consultations.

People at HIGH RISK

(clinically extremely vulnerable)

- ✚ Have a serious heart condition and are pregnant
- ✚ Have been told by a doctor that you have a serious lung condition (such as cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, or severe COPD)
- ✚ Taking medication that makes you more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids)
- ✚ Are having chemotherapy or antibody treatment for cancer, including immunotherapy

People at MODERATE RISK

(clinically vulnerable)

- ✚ Are 70 or older
- ✚ Are pregnant (see below)
- ✚ Have a lung condition that is not severe
- ✚ Have a heart disease (such as heart failure)
- ✚ Have diabetes
- ✚ Have chronic kidney disease
- ✚ Have liver disease (such as hepatitis)
- ✚ Have a condition affecting the brain or nerves (such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy)
- ✚ Are very obese (a BMI of 40 or above)

If you are pregnant

Information for pregnant women, written on the 4-Jun 2020, gathered from the following resources:

- [Occupational health advice for employers and pregnant women during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- Updated 4-June [Covid-19 infection and pregnancy Q&A's](#)
- Landing page [Covid-19 infection and pregnancy](#)

Why are pregnant women considered vulnerable?

- ✚ "Pregnancy in a small proportion of women can alter how your body handles severe viral infections. This is something that midwives and obstetricians have known for many years and are used to dealing with."
- ✚ As with other respiratory infections (e.g. influenza, SARS) pregnant women who contract significant respiratory infections in the third trimester are more likely to become seriously unwell. Therefore, the precautionary approach to classify pregnant women as vulnerable is to encourage awareness that pregnant women in later stages of pregnancy could potentially become more seriously unwell.
- ✚ "What has driven the decisions made by officials to place pregnant women in the vulnerable category is caution. We know that some viral infections are worse in pregnant women; however, all available evidence suggests that pregnant women are at no greater risk of becoming seriously unwell than other healthy adults if they develop coronavirus."

Covid-19 effect on pregnant women:

- ✚ “All available evidence suggests that pregnant women are at no greater risk of becoming seriously unwell than other healthy adults if they develop coronavirus. The large majority of pregnant women experience only mild or moderate cold/flu-like symptoms. Cough, fever, shortness of breath, headache and loss or change to your sense of smell or taste are other relevant symptoms.”
- ✚ Potential risk of becoming seriously unwell if in later stages of pregnancy.
- ✚ “Pregnant women over the age of 35, those who were overweight or obese, and those who had pre-existing medical problems, such as high blood pressure and diabetes, were also at higher risk of developing severe illness.”

Covid-19 and the baby:

- ✚ “No evidence to suggest that Covid-19 causes problems with a baby’s development or causes miscarriage. With regard to vertical transmission (transmission from woman to baby antenatally or intrapartum), emerging evidence now suggests that vertical transmission is probable. There have been case reports in which this appears likely, but reassuringly the babies were discharged from hospital and are well. In all other reported cases of Covid-19 in babies, infection was found at least 30 hours after birth.”
- ✚ “Across the world, emerging reports suggest some babies have been born prematurely to women who were very unwell with coronavirus. It is unclear whether coronavirus caused these premature births, or whether it was recommended that their babies were born early for the benefit of the women’s health and to enable them to recover.”

Preventing Covid-19

Clinic Measures for Prevention

Practicalities

We have adjusted the protocols for interacting with clients, practicalities before treatment and introduced various measures to prevent Covid-19 from entering the building and from spreading between people. Our Clinic measures are:

- ✚ Spacing out clients to reduce flow and allow time to thoroughly clean between appointments
- ✚ Booking and payment made online is preferable, although our receptionist will be available to book and take payment on the phone
- ✚ One-way flow through Clinic: enter from South Parade main reception/glass door and exit through Ormeau Rd facing staff/wooden door
- ✚ Clients will be accompanied by staff as much as possible to avoid touching surfaces (e.g. opening doors etc)
- ✚ Clients to wait in their car until 5 minutes before their appointment time
- ✚ If arriving without a car, wait on ramp or in reception on chairs spaced +2m apart.
- ✚ Chiropractor will take clients temperature remotely at reception. If you have a high temperature, we will not be able to treat you at this time and you should go home and self-isolate for 14 days as advised by the government.

- ✚ We will systematically clean the Clinic daily and between appointments, specifically focusing on areas where people have been in contact with (benches, handles, bathroom, doors, handrails etc).
- ✚ Social distancing advice applies in Clinic
- ✚ Windows and doors regularly opened to ventilate
- ✚ Chiropractors will guide and direct you as we will not have a front-desk receptionist at this stage
- ✚ We ask for your understanding if your appointment time is amended (forward or back by 5-10 mins) in order to stagger clients coming into the Clinic. You will be informed of any changes by email.
- ✚ If your Chiropractor experiences any symptoms – no matter how mild – they will be required to self-isolate at home. In such circumstances we regret that your appointment may be cancelled at the last minute due to Covid-19 circumstances, but we will prioritise you when rescheduling a future appointment.

Chiropractors will:

- ✚ Be within 2m distance when checking your movement and manually treating you on the bench.
- ✚ Wear a protective apron which they will change or clean thoroughly after every session.
- ✚ Wash their hands routinely before, after and during sessions
- ✚ Wear a mask and or visor as per agreed with the needs of each individual client
- ✚ Wear single use disposable gloves

We have adopted a flexible and tentative approach, and as such this document will be updated regularly to be in keeping with the most up to date advice from government, our professional bodies and what is feasible and practically working arrangement within the Clinic.

These are unprecedented times for all of us, so we ask for your understanding and patience with our decision making which are in the best interests of both staff and clients.

Please keep an eye on [our Facebook page](#) and subscribe to our mailing list to stay up to date on changes within the Clinic. You can sign up to our mailing list by heading to [our website](#), scroll down and bottom right of the page there is a section “Stay Connected” – just pop in your email address!

Alternatives to Face to Face

We aim to offer Telehealth video/phone consultations for clients who are not in urgent need of treatment but could benefit from advice and guidance in how to manage their musculoskeletal health. As this is a new way of delivering additional chiropractic expertise, our Chiropractors are currently working out how best to do this for you. As we conduct more Telehealth appointments, we will update this section on how to book your session. If Telehealth chiropractic care is something you would be interested in, please do get in touch by phoning or emailing the Clinic. (Tel 028 9064 1111 or email: admin@belfastchiropracticclinic.com).

Client Measures for Prevention

Self-Risk Assessment

We all need to be responsible and vigilant citizens during this pandemic. Therefore, we ask if you are experiencing any Covid-19 related symptoms (**no matter how mild**) to please cancel your appointment as soon as possible and self-isolate for 14 days, as advised by the government.

If you or anyone else in your household are currently undergoing the 14 day self-isolating/shielding procedure as advised under the government guidelines for Covid-19, please wait until after these 14 days before making an appointment.

If you believe you may have come into contact with Covid-19 we kindly ask that you do not attend our Clinic.

Symptoms:

- ✚ **High temperature/fever.** This means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- ✚ **New continuous cough.** This means, have you been coughing a lot more than usual, coughing for more than an hour or had 3 or more episodes of coughing in 24 hours
- ✚ **Loss of taste or smell**

If you feel unwell

We do ask, if you feel unwell - to call and reschedule and follow the advice below:

As per the government guidelines, "If you have symptoms of coronavirus infection (COVID-19), however mild, do not leave your home for seven days from when your symptoms started. This action will help protect others in your community while you are infectious.

If you live with others and you or one of them have symptoms of coronavirus, then all other household members must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill."

Drink lots of fluid, rest, isolate and use paracetamol.

Please use the [NI Direct](#) website as your first point of call. If your symptoms are mild you do not need to call the NHS 111 phone line, which keeps the line open for those with severe symptoms who need urgent attention. If you feel your symptoms are worsening or if you are not getting better, you should contact your, your GP, or use the NHS 111 online service for further information and advice. In an emergency, call 999.

How to prepare for your treatment session

To attend the Clinic:

- ✚ Wear clean, loose comfortable clothing e.g. shorts and tee shirt with loose pull up trousers and sweatshirt that you could remove readily as required for your treatment session
- ✚ We are unable to provide changing facilities or cotton gowns
- ✚ Please use the toilet prior to attending. The bathroom will only be available for emergencies.
- ✚ Please do not bring extra family or friends with you.
- ✚ Please wear a mask. We encourage you to wear your own reusable mask, however, if you forget or do not have access to one, we stock some single use masks that can be purchased at reception.

When you arrive:

- ✚ Please wait in your car and your chiropractor will meet you at the Clinic door shortly before your appointment.
- ✚ Please approach the Clinic entrance not more than 5 minutes before your appointment
- ✚ Please wear your mask before entering. Please wear your mask according to the guidelines given by [CDC](#).

- ✚ There will be a one-way flow, where you enter through the main reception/glass door facing South Parade and exit through the staff/wooden door facing Ormeau Road.
- ✚ Use the hand sanitiser provided when you enter/leave the Clinic.
- ✚ The chiropractor will take your temperature using a remote thermometer which tests from your forehead.
- ✚ Try to avoid touching surfaces inside the Clinic as you will be welcomed in and guided to the treatment room so no need for you to make contact with door handles etc

During Clinic visit:

- ✚ The Chiropractors will be wearing appropriate PPE too, they will be cleaning the bench and other surfaces and hand washing and sanitising between appointments.
- ✚ We will be spacing our appointment times in order to minimise the number of people in the building
- ✚ There will be limited chairs in reception. As only one chiropractor is working at a time and we are spacing out appointments, you should be the only person in the Clinic.
- ✚ Sneeze or cough into a tissue and dispose immediately.
- ✚ Please keep to social distancing measures, guided by the instruction stickers in the Clinic.

Clinic Risk of Transmission and Client Responsibility

Although we are taking every precaution available to minimise the risk, there is still a potential risk of transmission of Covid-19 due to attending our Clinic and receiving a face to face treatment. Each Chiropractor will be adhering to the preventive measures and protocols the Clinic management have implemented, as per professional guidance. We require that each client agrees to adhering to the preventative measures that are currently in place at the Clinic in regard to optimal social distancing, hand washing and sanitising, respecting other Clinic users and following the one way system of entering and exiting the building and any other additional protocols. We also require that each client accepts responsibility for taking this risk and understand that the Clinic cannot be held responsible if you should contract the virus. If you are living with or caring for someone who is in the high-risk group, please also consider the additional risk of attending the Clinic in respect of them.