

## **Welcome to Our Community!**

Please take a minute to read this introduction to our clinic and to our community. We are delighted that you are interested in joining us!

### ***What is different about this acupuncture clinic?***

- **We treat in a community setting -**

Most US acupuncturists treat patients on tables in individual cubicles. This is not traditional in Asia, where acupuncture usually occurs in a community setting. In our clinic we primarily use recliners, clustered in groups in a large, quiet, soothing space. Treating patients in a community setting has many benefits: it's easy for friends and family members to come in for treatment together; many patients find it comforting; and a collective energetic field becomes established which actually makes individual treatments more powerful. In some styles of acupuncture, the needles are removed after only a few minutes or after a half hour at most. The style of acupuncture we practice allows patients to keep their needles in as long as they want up to an hour. Most people learn after a few treatments when they feel "done" and can ask for needles to be removed. Many people fall asleep, and wake feeling refreshed.

- **We have a sliding scale -**

Most US acupuncturists also see only one patient per hour and charge \$65 to \$175 per treatment. They tend to spend a long time talking with each patient, going over medical records, asking many questions. We don't. The only way that we can make acupuncture affordable and still make a living ourselves is to streamline our treatments and see multiple patients in an hour, so we have returned to the traditional approach; instead of asking you lots of questions, we rely on pulse diagnosis to decide how to treat you. This is exactly how acupuncture is practiced traditionally in Asia -- many patients per hour and very little talking.

Please see the enclosed form that explains our sliding scale. Because we have a sliding scale, we cannot do insurance billing (that's the insurance companies' rule). If you have insurance that covers acupuncture, we'll be happy to give you a payment receipt, and you can submit it; that's OK with the insurance companies.

### ***Our Commitment to You***

We want to make it possible for you to receive acupuncture regularly enough and long enough to get better and stay better. We want our community to be welcoming to all different kinds of people. We want to give you the tools to take care of your own health so that you will not need to rely on corporations like Big Insurance or Big Pharmaceuticals for costly, high-tech interventions. We will provide a safe environment with skilled practitioners.

### ***What We Need From You***

- Responsibility**

We do not provide primary care medicine! Ann Mongeau is a registered nurse and has been a family nurse practitioner but she works here as an acupuncturist, not in a nursing capacity. Acupuncture is a wonderful complement to Western medicine, but it is not a substitute for it. If you think you have a problem that is not "garden variety" (meaning, you are worried that you might have a serious infection, a malignant growth, or an injury that won't heal), or if you want someone knowledgeable to go over the details of your medical history with you, you need to see a primary care physician (ND, MD, or DO). You cannot expect us to diagnose and treat something really serious. We *can* provide complimentary care for conditions that require a physician's attention -- for instance, we often treat patients for the side effects of chemotherapy. But we need you to take responsibility for your own health.

We do not receive grants, state or federal money, or insurance reimbursement. We exist because patients pay for their treatments -- it is a sustainable community business model.

- Flexibility**

The community setting requires some flexibility from you. For instance, many patients have a favorite recliner. When we are busy, someone may be sitting in yours. Similarly, we have a few patients who snore. Other patients who dislike snoring bring earplugs to their treatments. We are grateful for this! Some of our patients even bring favorite pillows or blankets from home with them, because they prefer theirs to ours. That's fine with us. Basically, we need you to participate in making yourself comfortable in the community room before we arrive to treat you.

In terms of how long you want to stay -- tell the receptionist, if present, or the acupuncturist, when you check in, if you need to be somewhere at a certain time! We'll make sure you're out on time. In general, if you feel done, open your eyes and give us a meaningful look -- if your eyes are closed, we think you're asleep and we won't wake you up.

#### □ **Community-Mindedness**

The soothing atmosphere in our clinic exists because all of our patients create it by relaxing together. We appreciate everyone's presence! This kind of collective stillness is a rare and precious thing in our rushed and busy society. Maintaining this reservoir of calm requires that no one talk very much in the clinic space. If you would like to speak to a practitioner one-on-one at any length, please let us know. If you want to have a substantial conversation, we will probably need to schedule that separately and might need to do it by phone.

If you have questions about acupuncture and how it works -- please read the [Working Class Acupuncture for Patients](#). You can buy a copy on line at [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com), or read our clinic copy in the waiting room. Unfortunately, we can't explain what every point does, or how acupuncture works, while we are treating you -- these are very large topics! If you have questions, we'll happily give you recommendations of what to read!

Part of our success is that our patients learn the "routine" and take on a lot of responsibility for the appointments. Re-scheduling and making payment happens at the front desk BEFORE each treatment, so you can relax and enjoy treatment. Please hang your coat in the coat racks and take all personal belongings, (bags, shoes, etc.) with you into the treatment room. And of course, please turn off your cell phone.

#### □ **Commitment**

Acupuncture is a PROCESS. It is very rare for any acupuncturist to be able to resolve a problem with one treatment. In China, a typical treatment protocol for a chronic condition could be acupuncture every other day for three months! Most of our patients don't need that much acupuncture, but virtually every patient requires a course of treatment, rather than a single treatment, in order to get what they want from acupuncture.

One big reason that we are able to keep our prices so low is because of the extraordinary amount of marketing our patients do on our behalf -- we don't have to advertise. We cannot express how grateful we are for this. Our patients are such effective marketers because they have first-hand experience of how well acupuncture works. All of our satisfied patients basically made a commitment to a course of treatment.

On your first visit or on the phone when you first talked with us, your acupuncturist will suggest a course of treatment, which can be anything from "we'd like to see you once a week for six weeks" to "we'd really like to see you every day for the next four days". This suggestion is based on our experience with treating different kinds of conditions. If you don't come in often enough or long enough, acupuncture probably won't work for you. The purpose of our sliding scale is to help you make that commitment. If you have questions about how long it will take to see results, please ask us, or if you think you need to adjust your treatment plan, please let us know. We need you to commit to the process of treatment in order to get good results.

And, last, but not least.... enjoy the space. We do, and hope that Mongeau Acupuncture LLC can be an important part of your community. Thank you,

**Mongeau Acupuncture LLC**

## Invisible Receptionist

I have been made aware of a way of stream lining the flow of the clinic and making it easier for me to give people the attention needed. It's called the Invisible Receptionist. It works like this:

A red box with envelopes is in the waiting room. You find the envelope with your name on it when you first come to the clinic. You leave your payment in this envelope – **PLEASE DON'T SEAL. I REUSE THEM.** Then you put the envelope in the Payment box. **Please pay before your appointment.**

If I need to communicate with you i.e. herbs from last week are \$, you owe me for last week, etc or you need to communicate with me i.e. I didn't bring my checkbook, I'll pay next week; here's for the next two visits, etc. we can leave notes in the envelope. Use the blank notepads on the table.

If you need a receipt, fill it out from the pad on the table.. If you need a receipt to send to insurance, ask me for that. It is a special receipt. If you need change, tell me. **Sometimes I process payment while you are sitting and sometimes I do it at the end of the shift. If you need something from me the day of the appointment, be sure to mention it to me when I greet you at your chair.**

**Then schedule yourself** for your next visit, or the next few visits. **It works better for me if you schedule before you sit down for your treatment.** If you aren't sure how often to come back, ask me when you are in the recliner and schedule yourself after your appointment. You can make out an appointment card for yourself as a reminder.

Schedule yourself for one 10-minute slot. New appointments will have the name and phone number, taking up 20-30 minutes.

**Use only pencil** for scheduling as changes are made rather frequently.

**Then let me know you are here and find a chair**, take off your shoes and socks, recline back and relax. I will find you, we will whisper about how you are doing and I will set the needles.

I appreciate your participation in this. It results in me being more able to concentrate on treatments instead of all the paperwork and keeps your costs lower.

Mongeau Acupuncture provides high quality acupuncture at affordable rates in a supportive community setting. We practice a style of acupuncture which mostly uses “distal” points in the hands, feet, ears and neck – which means we will probably treat pain in your back by placing needles in your hands and feet.

Research In the United States (as well as thousands of years of tradition in Asia) has shown that acupuncture is most effective when it is done frequently and regularly – once a week is usually the minimum required to make progress on any kind of health problem.

## Community Fee Structure

**Acupuncture appointments are on a sliding scale of**

**\$15 - \$40 per treatment.**

**There is a one-time additional \$10 fee with the first appointment.**

***You decide what you can afford.***

The purpose of our sliding scale is to separate the issues of money and treatment; we want you to come in often enough to really get better and stay better! We understand that everyone’s situation is different, and our primary goal is to make acupuncture available to you as often as you need it.

We are often asked what acupuncture can treat. Here’s a list:

- Anxiety & Depression
- Arthritis, Tendonitis, & Joint pain
- Asthma & Allergies
- Auto Injuries
- Bladder and Kidney Infections
- Cardiac Palpitations (Irregular Heartbeat)
- Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
- Common Cold & Influenza
- Degenerative Disk Disorders
- Fibromyalgia
- Headaches & Migraines
- Hypertension (High Blood Pressure)
- Indigestion, Gas, Bloating, Constipation
- Insomnia
- Menopause Symptoms
- Musculoskeletal pain
- Nausea
- Orthopedic Conditions
- Pain - other kinds

PMS & Menstrual Irregularity  
Sports Injuries  
Tension / Stress Syndromes  
Work Injuries

It can be argued that many of the chronic illnesses (hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia) are due to the stressful lives we lead, the processed food we eat and our go-go lifestyles.

Unfortunately, most of us feel locked into these lives for one reason or another. Acupuncture deals very effectively with stress. Weekly treatments give you an hour of relaxation – sometimes the only hour that is truly yours all week. Acupuncture has been shown to release endorphins, normalize hormone levels and boost the immune system. We have seen people with severe chronic illness get their lives back in functional terms with frequent treatments i.e. 1-2 per week. What we mean by this is that people still have the chronic illness, but it no longer severely limits the things they can do in their lives. We also think that regular acupuncture treatments can help prevent the development of chronic illness.

## **Notice of Privacy Policies**

For us to disclose health information about you using your name or other information that would identify you, you must sign a written release:

- 1) Specifying to whom and under what conditions your written medical record can be released.
- 2) For us to speak with another health care provider about your case using your name.
- 3) For us to discuss your health with members of your family.

We may discuss your case while not using your name or any information that would identify you as an individual with other health care providers or as an example in a teaching situation.

We will put confidentiality notices on all faxes and e-mails that pertain to specific information which identifies an individual.

You must sign a form giving consent to treatment and the use of healthcare operations (use of needles, electrical stimulation, gua sha, cupping, heat lamp, topical herbs, etc.)

We will be glad to answer questions about this policy.

Mongeau Acupuncture LLC