

Benefits of Oncology Massage

All living beings benefit from touch that comforts and conveys acceptance, nurturing and care. Nurturing touch by oncology massage therapists provides ease from pain, physical and emotional comfort and reinforces a positive connection to health. Because of this, Oncology Massage is available in many of the world's leading cancer hospitals including Mercy Medical Center.

Research has shown that massage can reduce the physical effects of cancer treatments including pain, nausea and vomiting, swelling or edema. It also supports health by reducing anxiety, depression, fear and isolation and can help with increased body image, feelings of acceptance and well being. Importantly for caregivers, when the patient feels better, then caring for them can be easier.

Oncology massage training addresses the full spectrum of cancer-related issues: the physical consequences of cancer, the side effects of various treatments, and also emotional considerations. Your therapist will adapt his/her massage therapy techniques to your specific needs. In the words of one patient, oncology massage is like "a vacation from cancer."

Some patients have expressed fear that massage may cause cancer to spread but current clinical research has shown that massage does not contribute to the spread of cancer. Since the plan of care for the patient living with cancer takes into account the desires of the patient and the areas of cancer, if you have any concern, talk to your therapist about her/his plan for your massage.

Oncology massage is rarely covered by insurance but there are scholarships and programs available for free massages while hospitalized at Mercy. Gift Certificates to an oncology trained massage therapist can be a get well gift that is useful for both health and well being.

After you go home to resume your regular life find an oncology massage therapist who knows what to do, how to do it, when to do it and why. Massage can make your cancer journey easier. But, for your safety, it is essential that your therapist is familiar with the many specifics of cancer and cancer treatment and the safe application of massage therapy.