

Complementary Therapies

Oncology and Clinical Haematology

Introduction

This leaflet has been written to help you understand more about complementary therapies, what they are and how they can help any symptoms you may have from your cancer or haematological cancer.

What are complementary therapies?

Complementary therapies are used alongside standard medical treatments offered to you by your doctor. The Trust provides Aromatherapy, Reiki, Reflexology and Indian Head Massage. These therapies are termed 'complementary therapies' because they are offered in addition to, not as an alternative to, standard medical treatment.

Aromatherapy is a complementary therapy which incorporates gentle massage with blends of essential oils with a carrier oil.

Reiki is an ancient Japanese energy-based complementary therapy. The therapist transfers energy by laying their hands gently on the patient or holding their hands just above the patient.

Reflexology is a form of foot, hand or face massage and is related to the Chinese practice of acupressure. Based on the principle that there are reflex points in the feet, hands and face which correspond to all the body and applying pressure to specific points in the hands, feet or face aim to restore imbalances, relieve anxiety and any stress.

Indian Head Massage is a treatment to be given seated. It is a massage of the upper back, shoulders, upper arms and scalp. It helps relieve stress and tension, to stimulate hair growth and promotes relaxation.

All therapies are given by a qualified therapist. Your therapist is qualified to at least diploma level in Aromatherapy, Reiki and Reflexology.

Consent

We must seek your consent for any procedure or treatment beforehand. Your doctor will explain the risks, benefits and alternatives where relevant before they ask for your consent. If you are unsure about any aspect of the procedure or treatment proposed please do not hesitate to ask for more information.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

How might I benefit from complementary therapies?

A complementary therapy would aim to help you to:

- Feel better in general
- Improve your quality of sleep
- Reduce stress, tension, anxiety and depression
- Feel more relaxed
- Reduce symptoms such as pain and nausea.

Are there any risks or side effects when having complementary therapies?

There are very few side effects to having any complementary therapy. However, there are a few that you should know about before making your decision. They are:-

Allergic reaction to the oils (aromatherapy)

Your therapist will take a detailed history of your past medical history, medications, and allergies. Please bring a list of your medications with you to your first appointment.

Healing Responses

It is not uncommon in complementary therapy to feel a response. They are usually short lived lasting from a couple of hours to a few days after treatment. These include:-

Drowsiness after sessions

We recommend that you sit quietly in the waiting room for about 15 minutes after your session, until you feel fully recovered to go home.

Headache

You may experience a headache after your session. We recommend that you drink plenty of fluids following your session to prevent this.

Dehydration

You may feel thirsty after your session. We recommend that you drink plenty of fluids to prevent any dehydration.

Interactions with some chemotherapy drugs

Please tell your doctor and therapist about all other medicines that you are taking. This includes not only the oils used in Aromatherapy sessions, but also any vitamins, over the counter or herbal medicines that you may also be taking.

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, you may want to discuss the use of complementary therapies with the health professional looking after you.

Are there any reasons why I might not be able to have complementary therapies?

There are several reasons why you might not be able to have Aromatherapy;

- Facial Impairment
- If your platelet count is low
- If you have an infection
- There are some restrictions if you have lymphoedema or ascites (abdominal fluid)
- If you are taking anticoagulant therapy (blood thinning medication).

There are several reasons why you might not be able to have Reiki, if you have:

- Insulin Dependent Diabetics
- A pacemaker.

There are several reasons why you might not be able to have Reflexology:-

- If you have DVT or Varicose Veins
- Any lymphoedema
- Infectious conditions such as verruca, athletes foot, contact dermatitis
- Fungal nail infections
- High fever
- Gangrene
- Within 7 days following administration of chemotherapy.

There are several reasons why you might not be able to have Indian Head Massage:

- High temperature, fever, swelling or inflammation
- Severe bruising, any skin disorders in the areas to be massaged.
- Recent injury, accident or surgery to the head, neck or shoulder areas such as whiplash, concussion, etc.
- Acute infectious disease such as flu, chest infection or bad cough or cold
- Scalp infections
- Very high or low blood pressure
- Osteoporosis, frailty, chronic fatigue, Epilepsy, Diabetes and Spondylitis or Spondylosis in the neck
- Indian Head Massage should not be given in the head area to a patient with a brain tumour, cerebral metastases or where there is evidence of cerebral irritation.

Are there any alternatives to having Aromatherapy, Reiki, Reflexology and Indian Head Massage and what would happen if I decided not to have complementary therapies at all?

Aromatherapy, Reiki, Reflexology and Indian Head Massage are the therapies offered in this hospital without charge. You can access other therapies privately. For example:-

- Relaxation / Meditation / Visualisation
- Hypnosis
- Art / Music Therapy
- Acupuncture
- Yoga.

Complementary therapies are in addition to normal standard treatment. Therefore, deciding not to have Aromatherapy, Reiki, Reflexology or Indian Head Massage or any other kind of complementary therapy will not affect your overall care and treatment.

What does having complementary therapies involve?

During your first visit, the therapist will ask you about your general health and emotional well being and take a detailed medical history from you, including the reason for your referral. All information that you give will be treated as confidential. Your therapist will then decide how many sessions you require and how often they should be given.

You will be asked to sign a consent form.

You will be given a copy of this to take home with you and a copy will be kept in your medical notes. This does not mean you are obligated to having the therapy.

If you wish to stop at any time, just let your therapist know.

During visits you will receive complementary therapy. You will be asked to lie on a couch in a comfortable position or seated. Your therapist will either hold their hands above you or gently on you or, massage appropriate oils onto your body depending on which therapy you are having. The therapy will take up to half an hour. It should not affect your ability to drive home once you have recovered from your therapy.

After every visit, your therapist will write about your session in your individual patient notes.

Due to the nature of the treatment you are having, please come with clean skin for hygiene and infection prevention purposes.

During your last visit, the therapist will again ask you about your health and emotional well being. Together you will evaluate how useful the sessions have been. This will be documented in your individual patient notes.

How often would I have a complementary therapy?

You will be offered up to six sessions, lasting between half an hour and one hour. Your therapist will discuss suitable appointments with you.

Which complementary therapy would be right for me?

Your therapist will discuss which therapy would be best for the symptoms that you have. You can choose from Aromatherapy, Reiki, Reflexology or Indian Head Massage.

How can I get referred for a complementary therapy?

You will need a referral from your Hospital Doctor, Clinical Nurse Specialist or Radiographer to be able to access complementary therapies provided by the Trust. The Macmillan support and information centre can also do referrals.

Where can I get more information?

If there are any questions that you would like to ask about complementary therapies, please speak to your Doctor, Clinical Nurse Specialist or Radiographer or ring Macmillan Support and Information Centre 01902 695234.

For additional information refer to:

Macmillan Support and Information Centre

Zone C, location C1

New Cross Hospital

WV10 0QP

Tel: 01902 695234

Email: rwh-tr.macmillanwolverhampton@nhs.net

Macmillan Cancer Support

Macmillan is a national charity providing telephone advice and free booklets on cancer and treatments.

Tel: 0808 800 00 00

www.macmillan.org.uk

Federation of Holistic Therapists (FHT)

18 Shakespeare Business Centre

Hathaway Close

Eastleigh

Harts SO50 4SR

www.fht.org.uk

Tel: 023 8062 4350

Email: info@fht.org.uk

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。