Can You Get a Massage If You Have Cancer?

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Massage for Cancer Patients

Giving yourself a massage when you have cancer helps you shift the balance of being cared for to taking control of your health. Massage has known and proven benefits for those who have been suffering from cancer.

You may not be in a position to hire the services of a professional massage therapist. This is not a problem. There are many parts of your body that you can massage yourself: these include arms, legs, neck, feet, face, head, chest, torso and buttocks.

If you've had medical treatments for cancer and are experiencing symptoms like fatigue, lack of energy, nausea, headaches, and pain, it's possible that massage may help you find relief.

What Are the Benefits of Massage for Cancer Patients?

In previous studies, massage has been found to be effective the following:

- Reducing cancer-related fatigue
- Reducing pain after operations
- Boosting the immune system
- Relieving nausea in cancer patients
- Increasing lymphatic drainage
- Relieving depression and anxiety
- Reducing tension in the muscles
- Improving joint range of motion

Massage, a complementary treatment for cancer, can transport you from a point of pain to a place where you can focus on everything the massage therapist is doing. The therapists' touch is a loving one, and the love will go a long way towards healing.

Massage for Cancer: Considerations

Always check with your doctor to see if it's okay to get a massage. Remember that most doctors have never had a massage, and they may not familiar with the variety of types, let alone how they all heal.

If you've had surgery, wait until the incision heals before getting a massage in that area. However, surgery wouldn't stop you from getting ahead and scalp massage, or a neck/shoulders/upper back/upper chest massage in a chair.

You could also have a foot reflexology massage, for which you can remain in bed while the massage therapist works on your feet, pressing points that open up into the different organs and tissues of the body.

At-Home Massage for Cancer Patients

Here's the process to get started:

1. **Make up your own massage oil.** This way you can control the ingredients. Of course, you could always purchase massage oil but creating your own does help get you more involved.
2. **Decide to do three massages in a week.** These do not need to be longer than 10-minute massages. You might even be able to do this first thing in the morning after you wake up, or last thing before you go to sleep. The longer the massage oil sits on your skin, the more the medicinal benefits are transferred to your body.

What Cancer Patients have in Common

There is one principle to consider if you have cancer; every cancer patient needs extra help with detoxification.

Since the natural treatment of massage increases detox effects in the body, go slow when you start out until your body can handle a full massage. Thus, your first massage might only be ten minutes, as opposed to the usual forty-five minute or one-hour long massage.

Start out with foot reflexology style massages, perhaps one every other day for the first week before adding a ten-minute chair massage. Then have ten-minute of foot reflexology massage plus the ten-minute chair massage every other day for the next two weeks. Of course, this should be tailored to how you feel, and your personal massage therapist will make recommendations to you along the way.

Then you could progress to a fullback massage without the foot reflexology and chair massage. By this point, you should be feeling great, and certainly much better than when you started.

Massage effects are cumulative so the more often you go for them, the greater the rewards. When selecting a massage therapist, make sure they have been professionally schooled at a massage college, make sure they have been licensed, and that they have been working on patients for at least five years. Now get started!