

## Meeting your individual needs

Everyone is different, and depending on where you are in your treatment, your needs may also differ from one session to the next. Communication with your therapist is very important. Many people are sensitive to pressure and prefer light touch. Let your therapist know if anything is uncomfortable, for example, if pressure is too much or too little, if an area is extra sensitive, or if scents from oils are irritating.

Your massage therapist can offer extra pillows or bolsters for your comfort, if needed. It is not necessary to lie in a particular position, such as face down. In fact, therapists can massage a person confined to a bed or a wheelchair.

Keep in mind that, like any input to your system, massage can tax your energy. Short sessions may be best at first, to help you and your therapist judge what works for you. Depending on your stamina and pain levels, your therapist may want to adjust or reschedule a session. She or he will work with you in partnership to determine the approach and techniques to best meet your needs.

*Massage gives people with cancer a chance to piece their body back together again. For an entire hour they have the same person working with them in a soothing manner, giving them an experience that has a beginning, a middle and end. It allows them to rest, and the hospital is not a restful place. They feel nurtured and loved and soothed. – Gayle MacDonald, author of Medicine Hands: Massage Therapy for People with Cancer.*

(Content adapted from Natural Touch Marketing™  
Massage for Cancer brochure.)

## Patient testimonials

*“As a cancer/chemo patient myself, I love and need the benefits of a massage. The massage provides not only relaxation, but provides the release and flow of energy throughout my body. I have a massage every three weeks between my treatments. Lynn is excellent and well trained.”*  
Brenda – Fitchburg

*“Time was non-existent. No worries, no cares. It truly places you in another world. I never knew what relaxing was. It’s a first! This was first rate! Thank you!”* Deb – Gardner

*“I am new to massage and wish I had one year ago! Lynn is absolutely wonderful! Magic hands! Thank you so much.”* Sandy – Fitchburg

*“It was wonderful to come here today and put all worries and stress behind me for an hour. Thank you!”* Denise - Fitchburg

Massage services are available at the  
**Simonds-Hurd Complementary Care Center**  
275 Nichols Road – Entrance 2  
Fitchburg, MA 01420  
 (“Burbank” campus)

For information about additional services or classes available at the center, please call 978-655-5800 or visit our website at [www.simondshurd.com](http://www.simondshurd.com)

*Gift certificates available for purchase*

 **UMassMemorial**  
**HealthAlliance Hospital**

**Simonds-Hurd Complementary Care Center**



## Massage and Cancer

**A healing respite during a challenging time**





**Lynn Rochefort** is a licensed and nationally board certified massage therapist and graduate of Bancroft School of Massage with advanced training to provide massage to people experiencing cancer treatment and with a history of cancer. Lynn strongly believes that massage helps people to reconnect with their own body and bring them to a place of profound health and healing.

Contact Lynn directly to schedule your massage.  
Phone: 508-816-3994  
Email: [lynn.rochefort@gmail.com](mailto:lynn.rochefort@gmail.com)  
Available: Mon/Tue/Thu/Fri/Sat

## Relieving your discomfort

Many people find that when medication doesn't completely ease their pain, massage helps. It can ease muscle tension, help eliminate irritating toxins and decrease achiness caused by forced inactivity. In addition, massage can reduce the discomforts of nausea, fatigue, insomnia, and peripheral neuropathy.

Most of all, massage offers deep relaxation of body and mind that can bring profound relief. As you let go and focus on the comfort of nurturing touch, pain and anxiety lose their grip. Your physical and mental load can lift, often increasing your sense of energy and optimism. This welcome respite can extend into the hours and days beyond your sessions.

## Support for your recovery

Touch therapies can support recovery in a number of ways. Massage can increase circulation and speed healing in tissues affected by surgery or radiation. Certain advanced techniques, applied with caution, can reduce swelling and restore pliability to scarred areas. In addition, due to its ability to decrease muscle tightness and increase range of motion, massage can help you feel more like stretching, exercising and enjoying recreational activities as you recover. Finally, as massage reduces pain and stress, your body is better able to rally as healing capabilities improve on all levels.

## Your emotional well-being

No matter what your stage of treatment, skilled and caring touch can affirm that life still holds warm, positive experiences. A one-on-one massage session can nurture you while you are undergoing treatment or adjusting to physical changes, such as mastectomy or hair loss. If you have encountered changes in your activity levels or social network, or are coping with fear, anxiety or depression, massage can provide a time for self care and acceptance of tender emotions. In cases where cancer is no longer treatable, attentive touch may provide the most consoling kind of support a person can receive.

## Part of your health care team

It is now generally accepted by the medical profession that gentle, professional touch can reduce many of the discomforts of cancer and its treatment. Your care is complex, however, so inform your physician or patient care team before receiving massage.

Your therapist needs to be kept up-to-date on your treatment in order to determine what is appropriate. For example, vigorous pressure is rarely advisable during or immediately following medical treatment. If you have had lymph nodes removed or other surgical treatment, be sure



to let your therapist know. A massage therapist trained in working with cancer patients can answer any questions about receiving massage.

## What research says

Many hospitals, such as Memorial Sloan-Kettering, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center and Stanford University Hospital provide touch therapies for cancer patients. Research confirming the benefits of touch therapies is appearing in numerous reputable journals such as *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*; *International Journal of Oncology, Biology and Physics*, and *Cancer Nursing*. Studies have found that cancer patients variously experienced less pain, anxiety, nausea or fatigue, increased their immune response, and felt more relaxed after receiving massage or other touch therapies.

## The gift of touch

No matter what stage of cancer you are experiencing, massage therapy offers a chance to let go and recover the healing effects of relaxation. Under the nurturing hands of your practitioner, you will be cared for with a therapy that addresses not your disease, but you as a whole person. Even in a crowded schedule, you will find a massage to be a completely different experience – a restorative and healing experience.