The Complementary Therapy Service at the Cancer Care Centre

Information for patients, relatives and carers
York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Wigginton Road  I  York  I  YO31 8HE

Main Hospital 01904 631313
The Cancer Care Centre 01904 721166

Opening Hours Monday: Friday 9am – 4.30pm

Supported by

York Against Cancer
Registered charity number 1130835

MACMILLAN. CANCER SUPPORT
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Wifi Please feel free to use your tablet, mobile or laptop to keep in touch whilst you spend time with us
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What are complementary therapies?

‘Complementary therapies are used alongside orthodox treatments with the aim of providing psychological and emotional support through the relief of symptoms.’

- NICE Supportive and Palliative Care Improving Outcomes Guidance (2004).

The term complementary therapy is used to cover a range of specific therapies offered to patients who have been given a cancer diagnosis, as having potential benefit; these are not offered as an alternative to tumour reduction. Hence they are ‘complementary’ and not ‘alternative’ therapies.
Complementary therapies available at the Centre

Aromatherapy massage
Involves gentle massage using essential oils; these are fragrant oils extracted from plants. Different oils can be used for treating different conditions. Oils are diluted in a ‘carrier oil’ to form a ‘blend’, it is this blend that will be used on your skin. The aromatherapy oils may be varied at each session, depending on how you felt after the previous treatment and how you are feeling when you attend. However, it is not always appropriate to use essential oils and in this case only sweet almond oil will be used.

Reflexology
Reflexology works on the principle that the body is divided into different zones and that each zone links to a particular ‘reflex’ area on the feet and hands. The nerve endings in each zone are stimulated through pressure, manipulation and gentle massage. This helps to bring the body back into a state of natural balance – it encourages relaxation and promotes circulation.
Reiki (pronounced rey-key)
Reiki is a gentle, non-intrusive, hands-on technique. The word means ‘universal life energy’, which is all around us. It is this that practitioners draw upon when providing Reiki. Illness can be a time of great stress. Reiki can help by encouraging relaxation, promoting a calm, peaceful sense of well-being on all levels.

Indian Head Massage (IHM)
IHM is based on the Ayurvedic system of healing which has been practiced in India for over a thousand years. It involves manipulation of the soft tissues of the upper back, shoulders, neck and scalp – all areas vulnerable to stress. A variety of massage movements are used to relieve accumulated tension, stimulate circulation and restore joint movement. It is a non-invasive treatment given whilst you are seated on a chair, your therapist will use a small amount of oil. It can be performed through clothing if the use of oil is not desired.

“The treatment left me with a new outlook toward my illness and gave me the feeling that I can get through it.”
The risks and benefits

Benefits
Many people with cancer find having complementary therapy sessions helps them to cope with their disease and the side-effects of their treatments.

- Complementary therapies may;
- Promote relaxation and circulation
- Reduce anxiety and insomnia
- Ease the side-effects of treatment, for example nausea, fatigue
- Help you to find your own coping mechanisms and strategies and offer a sense of deep relaxation

Risks
Many therapies are safe to use alongside the treatments prescribed by your hospital doctor, but some may not be. Your therapist will assess this from your referral form and following a consultation at your first appointment. There is a minimal risk of allergy with the oils that may be used however, this will be explained to you fully by the therapist. Some people experience minimal side effects from therapies, these may include; extreme relaxation, enhanced energy, increased appetite, increased urination, a disrupted sleeping pattern, headaches and heightened emotions. These possible reactions to therapy will be explained to you by your therapist.
Is everyone suitable for a therapy?

On occasions it may not be appropriate for you to receive any therapy, if this is the case, a therapist will explain this to you fully.

Is everyone suitable for a therapy?

To prepare, please drink fluids as normal but avoid alcohol and caffeine. Do have breakfast prior to a morning treatment and have a light lunch prior to an afternoon session. When you come in for a session, please arrive 15 minutes before your appointment time and allow yourself up to 2 hours with us. If you are attending for Indian Head Massage please wear minimal make up and you may like to bring a hair brush with you.

“I found it relaxing at the time, felt energised later in the day and the next day.”
What can I expect at a treatment session?

During your first session you will meet one of our therapists. They will discuss your own situation. Together you will complete a consultation form, this will include questions about your current and previous medical history including any treatment you are receiving and generally how you are feeling.

It is important that you bring with you a full list of any medications that you may be taking and also provide the therapist with information about any allergies you have. At each session you may need to remove some clothes, just socks and shoes for reflexology, nothing for Reiki. For Indian Head Massage you will be asked to remove your top and your shoes. If you are asked to remove any clothing, towels will be used to cover you. During your session you may sit up or lie down, whichever you prefer.

If you feel unwell during a session please inform your therapist and they will stop your treatment. After your session, please feel free to relax with us here in the Centre until you feel ready to leave. We recommend that someone drives you home after your session.
How do I book an appointment?

The consultant or clinical nurse specialist responsible for your care would refer you to the complementary therapy service at the Cancer Care Centre. Once the referral form has been received. We will hold it in the Cancer Care Centre until we are able to offer you a treatment slot.

Please be aware that due to the popularity of the services there may be a waiting list. We will then contact you to arrange an assessment appointment where we will discuss the treatments in detail.
How do I book an appointment?

We suggest you have a drink of water after each session. You are most welcome to stay with us for tea and biscuits after a treatment. You may feel sleepy and want to rest for a while before leaving the hospital, this is fine. Occasionally, some people feel alert and find it difficult to rest. Most effects settle within 24 hours.

After one or two treatments your body may respond in a very definite way. Many people note a sense of well-being and relaxation; some people report feeling lethargic or tearful; if you do please tell your therapist, be assured that this will pass.

If you do have any feelings that you didn’t expect, please tell your therapist, this will help them to understand how your body is responding to the therapy they are providing and it will help them to adapt a treatment for your individual needs.

“Between each session I think that generally I have been able to cope with decision making.”
“Reflexology aided relaxation & a feeling of well-being.”
Who provides my complementary therapy?

Here at the Cancer Care Centre we have a small team of qualified and experienced therapists. All with registration allied to the appropriate national therapy bodies (in-line with strategic guidelines) and have registration to the government backed Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC).

York Against Cancer

Our service is funded by York Against Cancer, a local charity which supports local people affected by cancer. Thanks to their generous donation we are able to provide you with a number of complementary therapy sessions free of charge however, if you would like to make a donation please talk to your therapist or a member of the Cancer Care Centre team.

York Against Cancer funds a number of other services for cancer patients and their loved ones. If you would like to find out more visit: YorkAgainstCancer.org.uk or call 01904 764466
Like to find out more about therapies?

If you’d like to find out more, Macmillan Cancer Support has a comprehensive booklet. You can take a copy from the Cancer Care Centre or you can request a free copy from Macmillan by phoning 0808 808 0000 or view it online on their website www.macmillan.org.uk

If you have any questions at all about living with cancer, you can call them free on 0808 808 0000
Tell us what you think of this leaflet
We hope you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact Jane Archer, Cancer Care Centre Manager and Macmillan Patient Information Manager on 01904 721166.

Teaching, training and research
Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer queries and help resolve any concerns about Trust services. PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email pals@york.nhs.uk. An answer phone is available out of hours.

Our Values
Caring about what we do Respecting and valuing one another. Listening in order to improve Always doing what we can to be helpful.
Please telephone or email if you require this information in a different language or format

如果你要求本資訊是以不同的語言或版式提供，請致電或寫電郵

Jeżeli niniejsze informacje potrzebne są w innym języku lub formacie, należy zadzwonić lub wysłać wiadomość e-mail

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