

## ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS?

For most patients there are usually only pleasant effects, and no unwanted side effects. However, rarely, patients may develop a skin reaction to the oils used, despite prior assessment for allergies. In this case, the advice is to wash the area with soap and water, and to drink 1-2 glasses of water. Infrequently, after a massage patients may feel some aches and pains – this may be due to tight muscles having received some attention. If this happens, the aches usually subside within 24 hours and the person then usually feels the benefits.

## HOW TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

- If you would like to receive massage or aromatherapy, speak to a nurse (or any other professional) from the ward, day hospice or community team.
- The nurse (or other professional) will refer you to the Complementary Therapies Team.
- The Complementary Therapist will make contact with you.
- The appointment will be on the ward (for inpatients), in the Complementary Therapy Room in Day Services for other patients and carers, and at the patient's home for housebound patients.

Your nurse or doctor may also ask the Complementary Therapies Team to see you and discuss how massage / aromatherapy may help / support you, and whether you would like to have a treatment.

For further information, please speak to any member of the clinical team, or contact the Complementary Therapies Team on 0113 218 5567.

# Massage & Aromatherapy

## Patient / Carer Information Leaflet



St. Gemma's Hospice, Leeds



## MASSAGE AND AROMATHERAPY – WHAT IS IT?

Massage has its roots in ancient history. Massage is a general term for working on the body, using a variety of techniques and strokes that involve touching, gentle kneading, and stroking the body for therapeutic purposes. Aromatherapy is the systematic use of essential oils topically (e.g. in massage, baths, creams and lotion), or by inhalation (through vapourisers, on a tissue, clothes or bedding). Essential oils are extracted from many plants by a distillation process, and have a fragrant smell.

Massage and aromatherapy are available to patients and their carers.



## HOW CAN MASSAGE AND AROMATHERAPY HELP IN YOUR CARE?

Massage or aromatherapy is used alongside other treatments, and care that you are receiving. You might benefit on a physical or psychological/emotional level. The therapies have been known to...

- promote relaxation
- relieve stress and tension
- provide emotional support
- alleviate anxiety and low mood / depression
- alleviate pain and other symptoms (eg nausea, breathlessness)
- improve sleep pattern
- support general well being and quality of life
- support adjustment to a different physical appearance

In addition, aromatherapy may help in the following ways...

- **mouth care** – dry lips and/or mouth, horrible taste in mouth, halitosis, sore mouth.
- **skin care** – dry, itchy, inflamed or sore skin.
- **wound care** – malodorous wound, assist healing
- **respiratory care** – breathlessness, soreness from coughing, assist in coughing up sputum

Massage / aromatherapy can also be something that gives you pleasure at this time. You may decide that you would like a treatment to support and help you cope with everything that is happening.

## WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

You may be seen in the inpatient unit, in the day hospice, in outpatients or at home (housebound only). Carers are seen in outpatients. At the first session, the therapist will assess your condition and needs with you, particularly in relation to therapeutic massage or aromatherapy. If you are an inpatient, this assessment is modified according to what your overall condition and energy levels allow. Subsequent sessions begin with a simple review prior to the treatment.

The therapist will assist you in deciding where you want / need to be massaged, whether to use essential oils and choice of oils. You may be massaged on your bed (if an inpatient), on the massage couch, or just sitting in an armchair. You are encouraged to find the most comfortable position for you on any particular day, and therapists are trained to adapt the treatment accordingly.

Some people fall asleep during a treatment. At the end of a treatment, if you are asleep, as an inpatient, the therapist will usually leave quietly, ensuring that the call bell is within your reach, and let the nursing team know. As a day hospice or outpatient, the therapist will have allowed sufficient time within the treatment hour for you to wake up and be alert. She may also suggest that you drink a glass of water before you leave.

If aromatherapy products have been made for you, the therapist will give you directions for use and will review the product with you on the next day or at your next visit.

