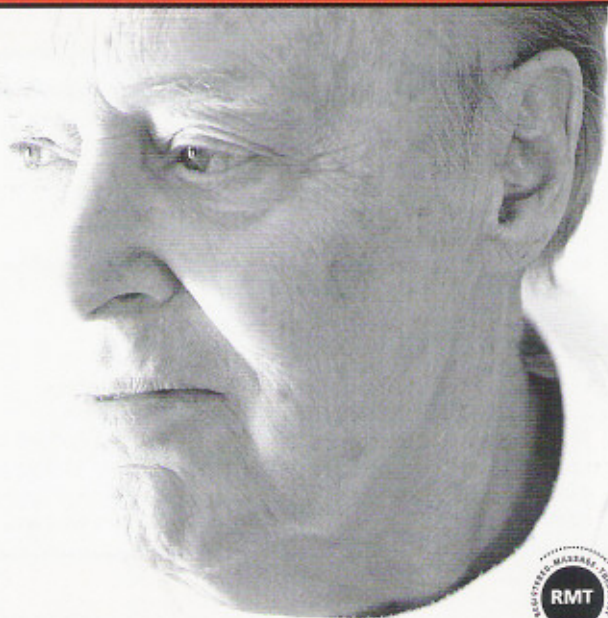


# Cancer



## Background

Cancer is a disease in which cells of an organ or tissue fail to respond to normal control mechanisms, growing and multiplying out of control.

Massage therapy is increasingly being included in treatment programs for cancer patients at clinics and hospitals around the world.

Current studies are showing beneficial effects of massage therapy, not for the treatment of the disease, but as an aid in enhancing quality of life.

# Cancer

## Treatment

### REGISTERED MASSAGE THERAPISTS MAY HELP:

- increase general well-being
- lessen anxiety and stress
- lessen nausea, insomnia & depression
- support immune function
- manage symptoms of lymphedema

**Precaution:** RMTs avoid massage therapy directly over known tumors and sites where metastasis may be predicted. Particular caution is exercised in patients with bony metastases, who may be prone to fracture. Currently, no evidence indicates that massage therapy promotes tumor metastasis.

## Research

### Meaningful relief from cancer by massage therapy

Eight female cancer patients were given massage for 10 consecutive days and then interviewed using phenomenology as a theoretical framework. The massage contributes to the development of a positive relationship with the personnel, to feeling strong, and to a balance between autonomy and dependence. The findings of this study can be of use to health care professionals as it shows that the relatively short period of massage can result in physical and emotional benefits for cancer patients (Billhult A, Dahlberg K, *Cancer Nurs.* 2001 Jun;24(3):180-4.)

### Safety and efficacy of massage therapy for patients with cancer

Conventional care for patients with cancer can safely incorporate massage therapy, although cancer patients may be at higher risk of rare adverse events. The strongest evidence for benefits of massage is for stress and anxiety reduction, although research for pain control and management of other symptoms common to patients with cancer, including pain, is promising. The oncologist should feel comfortable discussing massage therapy with patients and be able to refer patients to a qualified massage therapist as appropriate. (Corbin L, *J Psychosom Res* 2004 Jul;57(1):45-52)

Visit [www.massagetherapy.bc.ca](http://www.massagetherapy.bc.ca) for more information