



Fall 2008

Maintaining Touch

A publication of A Sensitive Touch Professional Massage Therapy, CornerStone Medical Specialties Building Room F3

Thought of the Day:

The highest reward for man's toil is not what he gets for it but what he becomes by it.

-John Ruskin

Massage = Cancer Respite

I have (unfortunately) an increasing number of massage clients who have either been diagnosed with cancer, or are recovering from cancer treatment of some sort. The research for this article is inspired by them.

Way back in 1986, when I received my initial massage training, a diagnosis of cancer meant NO massage. At that time, it was completely contraindicated because of a belief that massage had the ability to move enough bodily fluids around that it could contribute to cancer metastasis. There was no proof, only fear. Thankfully, that theory has recently been seriously reconsidered.

A lot of new research and technology related to cancer, massage, metastasis, chemotherapy, and medications have put

to rest many of the old theories and treatment protocols. There is still much work to do, and still many questions and varied opinions about how to proceed, but overall, we are better informed about the helpfulness of massage in the cancer process.

"A cancer patient in treatment is besieged with medications, scheduled procedures, test results, and the needs and worries of loved one. They can find in massage a brief, healing respite." mtj fall 2006 p.134

Here are some of the things I learned that I would like to share with you:

- 1. Some form of massage and/or therapeutic touch can be appropriate and beneficial in any cancer situation.**

As I said before, it used to be considered completely forbidden. Now we know that, depending upon where the client's health level is, we can do anything from regular massage or even fascial release

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Workshops through Community Ed.

Backrubs for Couples

Tue. Oct. 28, 6:30-8pm

Headache Relief

Tue. Nov. 5, 6:30-8pm

Shoulder Rubs for Couples

Tue. Nov. 18, 6:30-8pm

Offered through ISD833 Woodbury / Cottage Grove school district. For info: (651) 458-6600 or www.cecool.com

A Sensitive Touch



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Easy-to-Find New Location!!

Hopefully most of you received my postcard announcing my move into Woodbury. After a wonderful, nine year relationship with Metro OB-GYN (who will move offices in October), I have been invited to move into the CornerStone Medical Specialties Building with Metro-Urology.

This beautiful building was designed to be calming and comforting (perfect for massage!!) and also houses Minnesota Oncology Hematology P.A. and also Center for Diagnostic Imaging. I can be found up on the second level,

with Metro-Urology.

When you come for your next appointment, just meet me by the fireplace in the lobby! And make sure you check out some of the beautiful slate and wood they used to decorate the hallways.

The address is 6025 Lake Road, Woodbury, and is on the southwest corner of 494 and Lake Road. The entrance to the parking lot is off of Century Avenue. Also, please join me for my Open ~~House~~ /Room (see page 4).

Massage = Cancer Respite, continued

techniques, down to gentle, therapeutic holding. We may need to vary the depth of pressure, rhythm of strokes, movement of joints, etc. We will need to make the massage session one that is completely "supportive" rather than one that "challenges" the body. That means we're going to provide comfort, not seek to rearrange tissues (unless we're working gently on problematic scar tissue). This will all be dependent upon whether you, the client, are early in your diagnosis, are into the active treatment stage, or are in the recovery stage. Other things, like the advancement of the cancer, will also be taken into consideration. Additionally, we will need to work with your treating physician to determine if there are any restrictions in your care. But chances are good we can do something massage-like to help you feel better.

2. Massage restrictions will probably match exercise restrictions.

Massage is unlikely to increase circulation more than an exercise workout, and (more and more) exercise is being encouraged as part of the cancer recovery process. Also, "restrictions on activity are usually based on healing incisions, unstable bones or other risks, not on fear of cancer spread."

3. Here are the main cautions from cancer that would make us modify your session:

- Tumor site—we can't work directly over it, so as not to hasten cell shedding.
- Bone involvement—we will need to modify the pressure, especially if you experience any new pain, numbness, tingling, weakness, etc.
- DVT (blood clot) - these are sometimes asymptomatic, but usually you will have swelling, heat, pain, bluish skin, and/or enlargement of a vein. If you have been on bedrest or limited activity, we will really need to watch for this.
- Vital organ involvement—if the cancer has affected the function of the lungs, liver, kidney, brain or heart, we will probably need to lighten the massage. We don't want to add any stress or additional stimuli on these organs.
- Chemotherapy or radiation therapy—depending on how recently either of these treatments has been done, I may need to wear gloves to work on you. Generally the affects of the chemicals wears off a cou-

ple of days after have been administered, but we will need to check with your physician. Some of it will also depend on how your body cycles and feels after these treatments.

- Lymphedema— light pressure generally needs to be used if there is a risk for lymphedema. We will need to elevate the edemous area. If your physician suspects that scar tissue or adhesions are contributing to the lymphedema, it may be appropriate to do some gentle fascial release techniques to encourage lymphatic passageways to open up. However, it has to be gentle enough to avoid reddening the skin. If your physician has recommended any activity or physical restrictions, we will need to make sure your massage session is in line with those recommendations.
- Other side effects, such as nausea, vomiting, GI upset, mouth sores, dehydration, fatigue, skin lesions can be accommodated by either avoiding the problem area or repositioning you to a more comfortable position (for instance, my new table

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"...people in cancer treatment often deal with painful touch from procedures, examinations and treatment. Massage therapy restores pleasurable and corrective touch to a client's experience, and can help a client feel whole again." *mtj summer 2006 p.124*

Hey All You Sole Proprietors & Business Owners...

...my next newsletter comes out around Thanksgiving and I'd love to mention your business in my newsletter (no cost to you, only good karma!!). Please email me with a little ad (see sample for amount of space) of your business, service, and/or product and I'll get your info out to the rest of my current clients and on my website.

Gigi Decker & Irene Gottwalt

Moms Who Cook

Want live music for your next party, gathering, or wedding? This soprano/piano duo can perform jazz, classical, pop, etc. or singalongs! Will play your piano, or "have keyboard will travel". Gigi: 651-983-6954 or Irene: 651-793-0006



Massage = Cancer Respite, continued

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can be positioned so you can recline instead of lay flat). I have a sink in my new room, should you need sips of water or cool compresses to be comfortable. Acupressure often helps with nausea.

We can also shorten the length of your sessions, in order to help keep you as comfortable as possible during your session.

4. Massage therapists may be able to help screen for skin cancers, especially since they often see clients more frequently than physicians, and massage therapists often look at the skin on the back, shoulders, and backs of legs, where moles are often overlooked (I have successfully done this twice for my clients already). More information and training for this will be available in the near future.

Also in the future, I will be implementing an additional questionnaire to those clients who have been diagnosed with cancer. I will also be attempting to coordinate care efforts with your physicians, so I may need your permission to contact them about your massages.

So, in summary, it is now considered helpful to include massage in your overall treatment plan for cancer. Massage has been proven to be especially helpful for pain and anxiety. Careful considerations and modifications will need to be made during your massage session in order to accommodate symptoms and side-effects of cancer and its treatments, but... "After years of a hands-off policy, the performance of research by credible scientists

and institutions creates confidence that massage can be safely administered to people with cancer". mtj Winter 2002 p. 118

Sources Consulted:

"Breast Cancer and Massage Therapy" by Annette Chamness. Mtj, Winter 1996. p.44-48

"Clinical Thinking and Cancer" by Tracy Walton. Mtj, Fall 2000. p.66-80

"Could Massage Therapy Promote Cancer Metastasis?" by Debra Curties. Mtj, Fall 2000. p. 83-88

"Cancer Therapies" by Debra Curties. Mtj, Winter 2001. p.80-85

"Lymphedema 101: What Every Therapist Should Know" by Cheryl Chapman. Mtj, Winter 2001. p. 86-90

"Massage for People with Cancer" by Gayle MacDonald. Mtj, Winter 2002. p.104-120

"Cancer & Massage Therapy: Essential Contraindications" by Tracy Walton. Mtj, Summer 2006. p. 119-134

"Part 2. Cancer & Massage Therapy: Contraindications and Cancer Treatment" by Tracy Walton. Mtj, Fall 2006. p. 119-134

"Skin Scans Can Save" by JoAnn Milivojevic. handson, Jul/Aug 2008, p. 3.

"First Line of Defense: Early Detection of Skin Cancer by Massage Therapists Can Save Lives" by Clare La Plante. Mtj, Spring 2008, p. 90-102

Other Resources:

<http://cms.komen.org/komen/index.htm>

www.amtamassage.org/mtj

www.aad.org

www.cancer.gov

www.cancer.org

www.skincancer.org

www.floridaschoolofmassage.com

www.worldskinproject.org

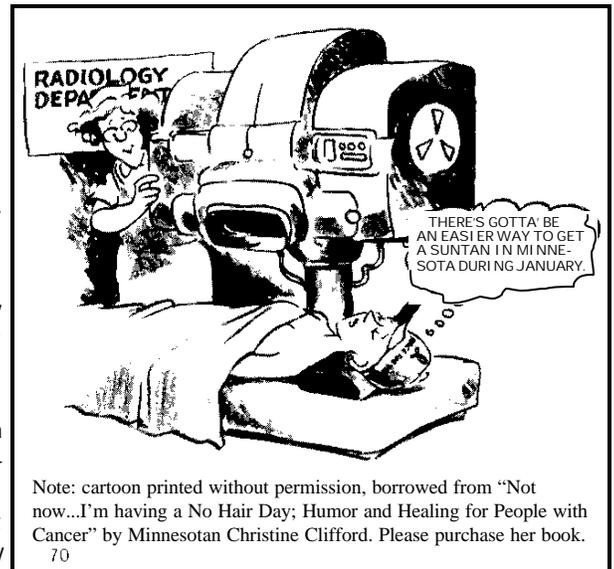
www.tracywalton.com

www.lymphnet.org

www.medicinehands.com

www.massagetherapyfoundation.org/pubmedsearches.html

www.mskcc.org/mskcc/html/11802.cfm



Interviews and Advice from 3 Breast Cancer Survivors

My mother has 3 sisters, all of whom have had breast cancer. I asked them to share some of their experiences and hindsights:

Aunt #1 (Lumpectomy & Chemo & Radiation): After her lumpectomy and some lymph nodes removed, she was glad she left the drain in as long as possible. She also says to do all the exercises, as it helped her regain 100% range of motion. Before chemo began, she purchased a wig and some scarves/hats before she ever lost her hair. It took her almost a year to grow back enough hair to feel comfortable in public without the hat or wig. She tried to schedule some fun activities between chemo sessions, so

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Interviews, continued

she had something to look forward to and helped keep her spirits up. She found the radiation to be the most exhausting, and still struggles with fatigue. She recommends a physical activity you really enjoy to slowly regain strength. In hindsight, she wished she talked to her doctor more about taking anti-oxidants (i.e. Vitamins C & E). She was advised to stop while receiving radiation, but she feels it contributed to her fatigue, and afterwards found studies noting that vitamin supplements do not interfere with therapeutic modalities for treating cancer.

Aunt #2 (Lumpectomy & Chemo & Radiation): "for me, it was just a speed bump in my life and most people get over it and go back to living completely normally". The radiation didn't really bother her, but the chemo

made her feel nauseous and tired, and that got worse after each treatment. Her biggest source of depression and frustration was losing her hair. Aunt #1 had recommended that once the hair began falling out, she shave her head right away. She resisted at first, but found that she felt better once she did. She didn't like the way her head looked, and she'd never liked how she looked in a hat before, and had trouble finding a hat she did like once she needed one. She found she needed to wear a knit hat or a thicker scarf under her hats, partly to help hold the hat on her head. In hindsight, she wished she'd gone to a hair stylist or someone in a hat department to help her pick out some "...items that worked with my head shape, skin tone, and clothing colors." Also, once her hair began growing in again, she went in rather soon to get

it shaped (it tends to come in unevenly, she says). Her hair still behaves differently (new cowlicks), which she finds frustrating.

Aunt #3 (Lumpectomy & Radiation): Get regular mammograms for early detection. Rally family around; at first she didn't want to tell anyone because she wanted to protect them from worry. It left her with little support during some challenging times. But once she did tell them, they became her personal cheerleading squad. She also stated that she didn't think radiation would exhaust her, but it did, so in hindsight she wished she'd allowed herself to take some time off. She also strongly recommends you allow someone to drive you to/from radiation treatments; she nearly had car accidents because she was so exhausted afterwards. "You don't have to be a tough guy -- ask for help and let people in."

Open ~~"House"~~/Room to raise money for cancer research!!



You're
Invited!!

Thursday, September 25th
3:30pm—5:30pm

Come and see my "new digs" in the CornerStone Medical Specialties Building, 6025 Lake Road, Woodbury, 2nd Floor.

Just follow the signs!
Light refreshments served.
Free, fun, helpful gifts!

A free-will donation will be taken for TheBreastCancerSite.org, the website that donates free mammo-

grams (see below). My business will match donations collected (up to the amount needed to bring the donation up to an increment of \$25, required for online donations) and Mayo Clinic will match our donation. Your single donation will essentially be quadrupled! All monies collected will go to The Breast Cancer Site Endowed Fund for Breast Cancer Research. They are working with Mayo Clinic, Gamma Medica, and GE Healthcare to develop new diagnostic devices to better detect breast tumors through dense breast tissue (which are more prone to cancer).

For more information (and to click and donate free mammograms), go to:

TheBreastCancerSite.org

With this newsletter focusing on cancer care, and with October being Breast Cancer Awareness month, it just seemed to make sense to do something positive for cancer research at the same time as my Open ~~"House"~~/Room. Hope to see you there!!

Bring some friends!

Final Note:

To see a REALLY nice testimonial about how massage can help in breast cancer/surgery recovery, see this online interview:

http://thenewmedicine.org/health_interests/surgery