



Complementary therapies – for cancer patients and their carers



What are complementary therapies?

Complementary therapies are supportive therapies offered alongside medical treatments. Many people with cancer find that these therapies improve their general sense of wellbeing by helping them to relax and cope with stresses caused by serious illness. These therapies are not aimed at curing cancer.

What is offered?

An outpatient service for patients (and their carers) is offered at both the Cancer Centre at Guy's in London and Guy's Cancer at Queen Mary's Hospital in Sidcup. The outpatient appointments run for approx. 45 minutes, including a brief consultation with your therapist and the treatment itself.

Patients in the chemotherapy day units can receive shorter treatments subject to capacity. Shorter treatments are also offered to patients on Guy's and St Thomas' wards. Treatments include

- massage
- clinical aromatherapy
- reflexology
- reiki
- acupuncture (Cancer Centre at Guy's only)
- relaxation and stress management

How can complementary therapies help me?

Complementary therapies may help you to

- sleep better
- relax and cope with anxiety
- ease aches and pains
- relieve headaches

- relieve nausea
- increase energy levels
- care for yourself
- support the management of treatment side effects
- develop a sense of wellbeing.

What is massage?

Massage is the application of gentle strokes to the back, neck and shoulders or other areas of the body, such as the hands, legs or face. Massage can be given to a patient while seated, on a massage couch or in bed. It can be given through clothing, or directly in contact with skin using unscented base oils or cream. Massage can relieve muscular tension and aid relaxation.

What is clinical aromatherapy?

Clinical aromatherapy uses the therapeutic properties of fragrant essential oils (plant extracts). Essential oils have therapeutic properties and their smell can be uplifting or calming. They can be blended with vegetable oils to give a gentle aromatic massage, or used for inhalation. The therapist works together with the patient to make up a bespoke blend.

What is reflexology?

Reflexology involves massage to reflex areas around the feet or hands, based on the principle that these reflexes correspond to all the parts of the body. During a treatment the reflexologist uses gentle techniques to stimulate the reflexes and nerve endings, aiming to relieve stress and tension, treating the body as a whole.

What is Reiki?

Reiki was developed in Japan as a practice of energy work and therapeutic touch to rebalance the body, mind and spirit. The therapist places their hands on or over the body in a sequence of positions with the aim of encouraging relaxation and a feeling of wellbeing. Reiki is not offering 'healing' for any condition, nor is it based on any spiritual belief.

What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture is the insertion of very fine needles at specific points on the body, to stimulate or relax. Acupuncture can be used to help with symptoms and side effects of cancer and its treatments. Research also supports the effectiveness of acupuncture for pain relief, as well as reducing sensitivity to stress and promoting relaxation.

Relaxation and stress management course

This two-session workshop teaches practical techniques that may help you manage stress, anxiety or sleeplessness. The course will cover

- what stress is and how it affects us
- practical ideas for dealing with stress
- self-massage and guided visualisations
- breathing and relaxation techniques.

Practical handouts and a relaxation CD is provided for each person to continue using the techniques at home. Courses for patients and carers are held separately throughout the year.

Eligibility and referral process

In order to be able to offer a fair service, the following eligibility criteria apply.

- Outpatient appointments are available to patients within 18 months of diagnosis. Pre-booking is required and waiting times are possible.
- Courses and workshops can be attended within 24 months of diagnosis and waiting times are possible. Please ask reception for more information.
- Ad hoc appointments at Chemotherapy Village are on a drop-in basis and subject to availability. Please enquire at Chemotherapy Village reception or ask a team member to help you sign up on the day.
- Ward patients can be referred by clinical staff. Please ask your nurse or consultant, or one of our team members.

Who are the complementary therapists?

All our complementary therapists have experience and training in working with cancer patients and are registered with the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council.

Contact us

To book a treatment or a place on the Relaxation and stress management course at the Cancer Centre at Guy's, phone Dimbleby Cancer Care on 020 7188 5918.

To book a treatment or a course at Guy's Cancer at Queen Mary's Hospital, phone 020 7188 0771. To book on the weight management course, phone the oncology dietician on 020 7188 4129.

Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals offer a range of cancer-related information leaflets for patients and carers, available at www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/cancer-leaflets

The logo for Dimbleby Cancer Care is a blue rounded rectangle with the text "Dimbleby Cancer Care" in white. The word "Dimbleby" is on the top line, "Cancer" is on the second line, and "Care" is on the third line.

**Dimbleby
Cancer
Care**

Dimbleby Cancer Care has a drop-in information area staffed by specialist nurses and offers complementary therapies, psychological support and benefits advice for patients and carers. We're located in the Welcome Village of the Cancer Centre at Guy's.

t: 020 7188 5918

e: DimblebyCancerCare@gstt.nhs.uk

The **Dimbleby Macmillan Support Centre** at Guy's Cancer at Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup offers information, psychological support and complementary therapies.

t: 020 7188 0771

e: DimblebyCancerCare@gstt.nhs.uk

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Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints)

e: complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and Accessible Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

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