

It is really important for your care that the information you give us is as full and accurate as possible.

This leaflet explains about complementary therapies available at St Christopher's and Harris HospisCare – if you have any other questions, we hope you will talk them over with a member of staff who will be glad to help. If you are thinking of using another complementary therapy service, please ask us for further information.



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INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS AND CARERS

Complementary therapies

Aromatherapy

Massage

Reflexology

Hypnotherapy

Relaxation



1 What are complementary therapies?

Complementary therapies are not an alternative to conventional medical treatments; they work alongside them to promote feelings of relaxation and wellbeing. They can also help with emotional and physical symptoms.

They may also:

- reduce stress and tension
- ease aches and pains
- help lift mood and reduce anxiety and
- help improve sleep.

All our therapies are adapted for use in palliative care and are gentle and safe.

2 What is massage?

Massage is the gentle manipulation of the body's soft tissue using specific techniques. The therapist will discuss with you what area of your body may benefit most from this treatment, for example back, neck and shoulders or legs and feet.

3 What is aromatherapy?

Aromatherapy uses essential oils extracted from flowers, herbs, fruits and plants. These oils can be used in several ways, most often in combination with massage or through inhalation.

4 What is reflexology?

Reflexology is a specialised form of foot massage. It involves the application of gentle pressure to specific points on the feet known as reflexes.

5 What is hypnotherapy?

Hypnotherapy induces a relaxed daydream-like state between waking and sleeping. The hypnotherapist will guide you into that relaxed state and then use positive suggestions to help you deal with whatever problem or symptom you may have. You are always aware of what is happening and remain in control throughout the treatment.

6 What is relaxation?

Relaxation is used to help you relax your body and mind. Relaxation groups are offered daily as part of the Anniversary Centre/Caritas Centre group programme. We also offer one-to-one relaxation sessions.

7 Are your complementary therapy team qualified?

All our complementary therapists have a background in healthcare and are experienced in palliative care. They are registered with the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council, and have appropriate professional membership and insurance.

8 How can I try a complementary therapy?

Please ask a member of staff involved in your care if you would like to be referred for complementary therapy. A member of the team will then contact you and arrange an appointment.

9 What can I expect at my first appointment?

At the first appointment your therapist will explain the treatment to you, and make sure it is adapted to your particular needs. The therapy will only be given with your consent and may be stopped at any time should you wish. It is important that you tell your therapist of any changes or new problems that may occur in the course of your treatment.

10 How often will I be seen and where?

You can be seen as an outpatient or when you visit the Anniversary or Caritas Centres. Therapies are offered as a programme of four sessions lasting approximately one hour. If you are unable to be seen as an outpatient we can offer sessions in people's own homes, as well as on the wards at St Christopher's for inpatients.

11 Is any help available for carers?

Our therapists are also able to offer carers a course of three sessions of complementary therapy. If you think you would benefit, please contact a member of the clinical team. We have produced a self-help DVD for carers, comprising complementary therapy techniques and other information that may help. Copies are available in the Anniversary Centre at St Christopher's and in reception at Harris HospisCare.