

MASSAGE & CANCER

CATHY WONG, ABOUT.COM GUIDE: AUGUST 10, 2009

Many physicians suggest using massage therapy as a complement to cancer treatment. Considered helpful in decreasing the stress and [anxiety](#) associated with cancer, massage therapy is also recommended as a means of easing cancer-related pain.

Although massage is typically administered by licensed massage therapists, caregivers can also be trained in certain massage techniques.

Benefits of Massage for Cancer Patients

While there's no evidence that massage therapy can stop cancer's growth or spread, a number of studies have shown that massage may offer these benefits for people coping with cancer:

1) Better Quality of Life

After receiving one 30-minute massage a week for three consecutive weeks, participants in a 2009 study (all of whom were undergoing breast cancer treatment) reported improvements in quality of life and functioning. Massage therapy also appeared to help study members [sleep better](#).

2) Anxiety Relief

In a 2004 review of 10 studies on [aromatherapy massage](#), researchers determined that the treatment may help improve psychological wellbeing and lessen anxiety among people with cancer.

3) Stronger [Immune System](#)

Massage may boost the number of natural killer cells and lymphocytes (both known to play an important role in immune defense) in women with breast cancer, according to a 2004 study. After receiving half-hour massages three times a week for five weeks, the study members also experienced a decrease in anxiety, [depression](#), and hostility, as well as an increase in levels of dopamine and serotonin (two mood-regulating brain chemicals).

4) Less Pain

In a 2002 study of 41 people undergoing chemotherapy or radiation therapy, massage was associated with decreased pain (in addition to less anxiety and better sleep quality).

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- MASSAGE & CANCER
- BEAUTY QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

BEAUTY QUESTION & ANSWERS

Question : I've read that liquid eyeliner can cause sinus infections. True?

A: This rumor presumes that eyeliner is able to drain into the sinuses, get trapped, and cause an infection, but that's not possible. Your natural tearing process can funnel bits of makeup into the tear ducts, but they drain into the nose and out the nostrils. If you develop eye irritation and sinus symptoms after wearing eyeliner, you probably had an allergic reaction. To wear eyeliner safely, use a hypoallergenic kind, replace it every 2 to 3 months, and apply it only outside the lash line.

Question : I get plenty of sleep, but I still have bags under my eyes--is there a cure for this, or does it require surgery?

A: It's normal for eyes to bag slightly due to decreased elasticity of the skin as you age. Try using a natural anti-inflammatory--place a chilled brewed chamomile tea bag on your eyes until it reaches room temperature. This will constrict the capillaries around your eyes, making circles and bags appear less dark.

Question : What are some immediate things I can do to look younger?

A: These easy moves set back the clock:

1. **Blow-dry hair smooth.** Frizz can make you look 4 years older, according to one study.
2. **Get a manicure.** Your hands can instantly reveal your age, and research shows wearing polish makes them appear younger. Opt for a light-colored hue and keep nails short; brightly lacquered or long nails draw attention to brown spots and pronounced knuckles and veins.
3. **Shape your brows.** Well-groomed brows open your eyes. Comb brows upward using a brow brush; trim stragglers straight across with a cuticle scissor. Then, with a slant-edged tweezer, pull strays from in between eyebrows (the inner corner of your brow should line up with the inner corner of your eye). To enhance the natural arch of your brow, tweeze hair from just below it.

Question : Lately my pores seem huge. Can I shrink them to get smaller pores?

A: To some extent, yes. Although your pore size is genetically determined, a buildup of dead cells, dirt, and oil can enlarge them. Regular skin sloughing dislodges debris, so exfoliate once a week for smaller-looking pores.

Rather than using a pore-minimizing base for smaller pores (which can settle into imperfections, making them more noticeable), use a creamy foundation that glides onto skin. A dusting of loose yellow-toned powder also helps since shine draws attention to your pores.