

## Oncology Esthetics: Benefiting Cancer Patients



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### Let's Talk About Spa Services and Cancer

I recently celebrated my 4th birthday! Four years ago, I was diagnosed with mouth cancer. It was a big surprise because I had never smoked a day in my life. It was a journey that had many ups and downs, and even though at times I was not expected to make it, here I am.

After my radiation treatments, my skin was a mess and I wanted a facial so bad, but I was unable to have a regular facial. That started my research into oncology esthetics, a new field in Canada that has been up and running in other areas of the world. I was so impressed by the course offered by Touch for Cancer that four of our estheticians attended the extensive training and became qualified in oncology esthetics.

### What is Oncology Esthetics?

All people with cancer who are undergoing treatment or are in recovery can benefit from Touch Therapy. Oncology esthetics focuses on the individual who needs a gentle, safe, light touch and approach to skin care treatments that assists in easing the discomfort that your body and skin endures due to cancer therapy. Health challenges, medications and the side effects of cancer therapy can cause irritation, dryness and fragility of the skin.

Oncology esthetics offers individualized treatments to help soothe, hydrate balance and calm the skin. It provides deep relaxation, relieves tension and stress, and helps promote healing, whether you are newly diagnosed or a cancer survivor. Oncology massage therapy can help

cancer patients maintain a high quality of life, according to an article in the National Institutes of Health. This article indicates that massage therapy can substantially improve coping mechanisms in cancer patients.

Touch is one of the most healing powers that human beings have at our disposal. The power of touch can be used to soothe and provide comfort to those who feel uneasy. In this same way, massage can provide a healing touch to help patients work through their feelings and gain a sense of comfort during a challenging time.

Those working through chemotherapy or who are recovering from cancer may feel uncomfortable in their bodies. Oncology massage can help reduce pain perception by up to 60 per cent.

Breast cancer patients in particular have shown a very good response to the positive effects of massage therapy, including the stimulation of the lymphatic system, which has been shown to increase immune function and white cell count.

Long and often stressful medical procedures put a lot of strain on the body. The patient may feel apprehensive and tense about all the new things going on with them. Scheduling an oncology massage can greatly reduce muscle tension.

### What You Need To Know

Oncology esthetics and massage is a specialized field. To prevent harm, make sure that only qualified oncology estheticians and massage therapists provide services. ■