

**Welcome ...** to the Holistic Cancer Care Centre at The James Cook University Hospital. The aim of this leaflet is to provide you with some general information about your reflexology treatment and answer some of the most commonly asked questions. You may find it helpful prior to your first visit, to make a note (on the back of this leaflet) of the things you would like to ask.

### **what is reflexology ?**

The implications of reflexology for people with cancer are to be found in the way we look at the person holistically. So often when people are given a diagnosis the focus is turned to the cancer site and not the person.

Many patients suffering from cancer make use of complementary therapies, with reflexology being a popular choice. It can help ease feelings of anxiety and reduce symptoms such as pain, nausea, constipation, insomnia and aids in relaxation.

Reflexology is a simple, safe and highly effective treatment for all age groups. The treatment involves gentle pressure and massage techniques on the feet or hands. A short consultation with the reflexologist will also take place prior to each treatment. It is not necessary to remove a lot of clothing to have a reflexology treatment only the shoes and socks. The room is warm and quiet and patients are encouraged to talk to the practitioner. The effects and touch of the treatment, individual care, attention and the

relaxation music all contribute to the benefits of the treatment.

Using a holistic view of each patient in order to alleviate their stress and discomfort can also be beneficial in reducing the side effects of the person's cancer treatment. Ideally, reflexology should be an integral part of the care provided for such individuals.

### **how can reflexology help me?**

Many people come to reflexology for help with specific symptoms or conditions. These might include anxiety states, asthma, back pain, circulatory problems, depression, high blood pressure, indeterminate aches and pains, menstrual problems, headaches and problems in relaxing.

Reflexology can be used alongside conventional medicine in the treatment of both acute and chronic disease. Some people may have reflexology as a preventative measure or because they feel unwell in themselves without being "ill" in the Western sense. As with any therapy, the response to reflexology can vary from one person to another.

### **what will happen on my first visit?**

Your first consultation may be longer than subsequent sessions. The reflexologist needs to assess your general state of health in order to identify the best treatment for you.

You will be asked about your current symptoms and what treatment you have received so far, your medical history, your digestive system, sleeping patterns and emotional state and current problems.

A brief explanation of reflexology and the theory behind how it works will be given prior to your treatment.

You will be either laid on a treatment couch or seated in a reflexology reclining chair and the reflexologist will work on either your feet or hands using reflexology cream and on some occasions aromatherapy essential oils may be included.

If you are undergoing chemotherapy and depending where you are in your cycles of chemo your practitioner may carry out the treatment wearing gloves.

### **how many treatments will I receive?**

Here in the Holistic Cancer Care Centre our patients are usually offered six treatments in the first instance.

### **should I let my doctor know?**

Yes. If you are receiving treatment from your doctor it makes sense to tell him or her about your plans to have reflexology. The reflexology treatment may enable you to reduce some forms of medication, but your doctor should be consulted regarding any change of prescription.

