



## Integrative Therapy Fact Sheet: Reflexology

### What is Reflexology?

Reflexology is the application of pressure to areas on the feet, hands, and outer ears. The theory behind reflexology is that these areas correspond to organs and systems in the body. Reflexology is non-invasive and known to be safe, and can be used before cancer treatment, during treatment, and after treatment.



### How Can Reflexology Help Me?

Reflexology has been shown to promote relaxation and comfort. Research and clinical experience show that it may help with treatment symptoms such as pain, anxiety and depression, fatigue, insomnia, and nausea.

Reflexology should not be used to replace medical care or to postpone seeing a healthcare provider about a health problem. You are encouraged to tell your healthcare provider about any and all therapies you are using outside of your conventional care.

### Reflexology at the Zakim Center

The reflexology practitioners at the Zakim Center are state-licensed massage therapists, who specialize in working with people with cancer. Reflexology sessions are 45 minutes long and include a check-in with your reflexologist. Your first visit may require a bit more time to allow you and your reflexologist to discuss:

- your medical history, treatment, laboratory results, and any pertinent information that will help your therapist provide you with a safe and effective session;
- any adjustments that may be needed to make you comfortable during your session;
- benefits of reflexology for your condition and symptoms;
- what your goals are for this session and/or ongoing sessions; and
- any questions that you might have before starting the reflexology session.

The reflexology session is generally done with the patient's clothes on, while allowing the reflexologist easy access to bare feet, hands, and ears. When using reflexology with other touch modalities (such as massage), you can choose to take off your clothing for work on exposed skin



on other parts of your body. Whether seated in a chair or on a table, your comfort and safety is our first concern, and you are encouraged to discuss your comfort needs with the reflexologist.

At the end of the reflexology session, you will be encouraged to get up slowly, and your practitioner will give you privacy if you need to dress. Afterwards, your reflexologist will check in with you to see how you are doing, and will discuss:

- any questions you may have;
- observations, expectations, and recommendations; and
- resources that are available and may be appropriate for you.

### **To Schedule a Reflexology Appointment at the Zakim Center**

To schedule a reflexology appointment, please call **617-632-3006**. Reflexology services are available to Dana-Farber patients only.

### **Cost of Reflexology**

We do not accept insurance for reflexology appointments. However, you may request a detailed receipt to submit to your insurance company for reimbursement if reflexology is a covered service. Adult patients pay \$65 for each reflexology appointment. Reflexology is complimentary to pediatric patients aged 21 and younger.

Thanks to the generosity of donors, financial assistance is available to those who qualify. For more information, please contact the Zakim Center office at **617-632-3322** or **Zakim\_Center@dfci.harvard.edu**.

### **Additional Information**

**National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health's "Reflexology" Page**  
<https://nccih.nih.gov/health/reflexology>

**Massachusetts Association of Reflexology**  
<http://www.massreflexology.org>

To learn more about the Zakim Center's programs and services, please visit our website at **[dana-farber.org/zakim](http://dana-farber.org/zakim)**, email **Zakim\_Center@dfci.harvard.edu**, or call **617-632-3322**.

*This document is for informational purposes only. The content is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.*