

## Physiotherapy in Oncology

Physiotherapy plays a key role in the holistic management of patients throughout the cancer journey. Within The Bon Secours Hospital Physiotherapists work closely with the Oncology team including Consultant Oncologists, Occupational Therapists, Specialised Nursing Staff and the Palliative Care Team to ensure a multi-disciplinary team approach.

Within the context of cancer, the primary goal of rehabilitation is to assist the patient in achieving maximum physical and psychological functioning within the limits imposed by disease or treatment.

Physiotherapy interventions for people with cancer will include exercise prescription, respiratory techniques, neurological rehabilitation, pain control techniques, lymphoedema management, education of patients and carers, and acupuncture for management of hot flashes.

There is growing evidence to show the importance of taking part in moderate levels of exercise through a cancer diagnosis and treatment. People are assessed on diagnosis and guided through an individualised exercise programme in order to minimise side effects of treatment. This may include the use of an exercise diary, referral to our Pilate's class or one to one physiotherapy gym sessions.

For people who have been diagnosed with breast cancer and completed their chemotherapy a Cancer Rehabilitation Programme run by the Multi-Disciplinary Team is being offered within The Bon Secours Hospital.

Physiotherapy is important after cancer-related breast surgery and reconstruction. The Physiotherapy team work closely with the Breast Care Nurse and Surgeons in The Bon Secours Hospital. They will prescribe specific exercises to do post surgery in order to maximise recovery and provide advice to prevent complications.

Breathlessness can be a devastating and common symptom in advanced cancer. This symptom can cause significant distress to patients, carers and families. Physiotherapist can assist in the non-pharmacological management of breathlessness. These techniques include the use of a hand-held fan, relaxation techniques, positioning, advice regarding pacing and anxiety management tools such as mindfulness.

The Physiotherapist plays a vital role in the care of patients who are close to end of life. This involves working with their family members, carers and community team, the provision of equipment and training to enable the patient to maintain as much function as possible and return home if appropriate.

Overall Physiotherapy treatment focuses on maximising quality of life and control of illness associated symptoms.