

CANCER REHABILITATION: OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY



Cancer treatment may affect your ability to perform daily or usual activities. Early occupational therapy evaluation and intervention is important for detecting and treating cancer-related issues. As key members of the cancer care team, ReVital’s occupational therapists address these needs.

Activities of Daily Living (ADLs): Cancer and its treatment can impact your ability to perform and engage in ADLs safely and independently. ADLs include, but are not limited to: bathing, dressing, eating, household management, work ability and work/social interaction. Occupational therapists can rehabilitate functional issues and provide instruction and education on environmental modifications, energy conservation techniques and use of assistive equipment to increase your ability to participate in life’s roles (work, being a parent, sister, brother and/or partner).

Cancer-Related Cognitive Impairment (aka

“chemobrain”): Occupational therapists help you adapt to the loss of cognitive function that often results from cancer and its treatment. Cognitive rehabilitation may include brain “exercises,” as well as strategies to increase physical activity, improve self-confidence, manage fatigue and compensate for lost mental abilities.

Cancer-Related Fatigue (CRF): Physical activity (everything from exercise to walking and household activities to gardening) can decrease the impact of CRF both during and after cancer treatment. Occupational therapists will evaluate you and create an individualized physical activity and energy conservation/activity modification program.

Pain: Occupational therapists use a variety of techniques that can assist in pain management during and after cancer treatment. These include: pain science education, relaxation techniques, hands-on techniques to release tight muscles and joints, therapeutic stretching and strengthening.

Peripheral Neuropathy: Peripheral neuropathy can be a common side effect of some chemotherapies. Patients with peripheral neuropathy may experience pain, numbness, tingling, weakness and balance problems. This can result in loss of balance, falling, inability to open jars or button clothes. Occupational therapists, in coordination with physical therapists, address these deficits to increase muscle strength, improve balance and coordination and reduce sensation issues to lessen fall risk.

Stamina/Strength Deficits: Addressing declines in stamina and strength is important to increase your ability to tolerate chemotherapy, perform ADLs and enjoy a good quality of life. Occupational therapists will evaluate you and create an individualized physical activity program to increase your strength and stamina.

Radiation Fibrosis/Soft Tissue Changes: Surgery and radiation may lead to skin, muscle and/or soft tissue changes that can result in tightness, scar tissue and muscle weakening. Occupational therapists utilize hands-on techniques, therapeutic stretching and physical activity to improve soft tissue restriction.

Lymphedema: Lymphedema can occur anywhere in the body, including arms, legs, face, neck and trunk. Early recognition and intervention may lessen treatment intensity and reduce the impact of lymphedema on your quality of life and ability to participate in life and work roles. Specially trained occupational therapists utilize various hands-on techniques, self-care education and physical activity instruction to assist in your long-term management.

Cancer rehabilitation focuses on overall function and participation in life roles and health versus a single system or body part. Therefore, interventions implemented by occupational therapists sometimes overlap with those implemented by physical therapists. When available, both disciplines work together to optimize treatment time, preserve financial/insurance resources and achieve the best outcomes for complex patients who have multiple needs.

Leading the way

The ReVital Cancer Rehabilitation program is exclusively offered by Select Medical and its family of brands. Our specially trained ReVital therapists effectively partner with oncologists and people affected by cancer to help improve quality of life.



About ReVital

ReVital is an innovative oncology rehabilitation program designed exclusively for people affected by cancer. Our specially trained therapists work closely with you and your oncologists to create a personalized treatment plan . . . one that is unique to you and your goals. Utilizing physical, occupational, speech and/or cognitive therapies, our ReVital specialists address pain, fatigue, neuropathy and many other cancer-related side effects with encouragement and compassion. From diagnosis through survivorship, ReVital can help you regain strength, physical function, comfort and independence. Your quality of life is important to us. As part of your cancer care team, we want you to live well beyond cancer.