

## CANCER REHABILITATION: PHYSICAL THERAPY



**Cancer treatment may affect your ability to perform daily activities. Early physical therapy intervention is important for detecting treatment-related impairments. As key members of the cancer care team, ReVital's physical therapists address these impairments, allowing oncology medical providers to focus on cancer diagnosis and treatment.**

**Cancer-Related Fatigue (CRF):** Physical activity (everything from exercise to walking and from household activities to gardening) has been shown to decrease the effects of CRF both during and after cancer treatment. Physical therapists will evaluate you and create an individualized activity plan designed to improve your aerobic fitness, strength and flexibility. Journals are provided so you can track your activity and share it with your therapists, which helps to increase your motivation and compliance.

**Pain:** Physical therapists use a variety of techniques that can assist in pain management during and after cancer treatment. This may 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. Physical therapists, in coordination with occupational 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 for increasing your ability to tolerate chemotherapy, perform activities of daily living (ADLs) and improve your overall quality of life. Physical therapists will evaluate you and create an

individualized aerobic, strength and flexibility program that facilitates your ability to safely engage in physical activity.

**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. Physical therapists utilize hands-on techniques, therapeutic stretching and exercise to improve soft tissue restriction.

**Osteoporosis:** Some cancer treatments may lead to osteopenia or osteoporosis (bone loss), causing the bones to become weak and brittle, thus putting you at a higher risk for fractures. Physical therapists utilize postural education, fall risk reduction strategies, physical activity and hands-on techniques to promote healthy movement and optimize function. Pain management education may be incorporated when fractures are present.

**Bowel/Bladder and Sexual Dysfunction:** Bladder/bowel and sexual dysfunction are common side effects for patients undergoing chemotherapy and/or radiation. Specially trained ReVital physical therapists utilize education, biofeedback, targeted exercises and

hands-on techniques to address bowel and/or bladder incontinence, constipation, diarrhea, painful intercourse and issues impacting sexual function. As these are private and sensitive topics which can be difficult to discuss, our therapists interact with patients in a respectful and empathetic manner that preserves your dignity.

**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. Specially trained ReVital physical therapists utilize various hands-on techniques, self-care education and physical activity instruction to assist you in long-term management.

*Oncology rehabilitation focuses on overall function versus a single system or body part. Therefore, interventions implemented by physical therapists often overlap with those implemented by occupational 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 impairments.*

## 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.