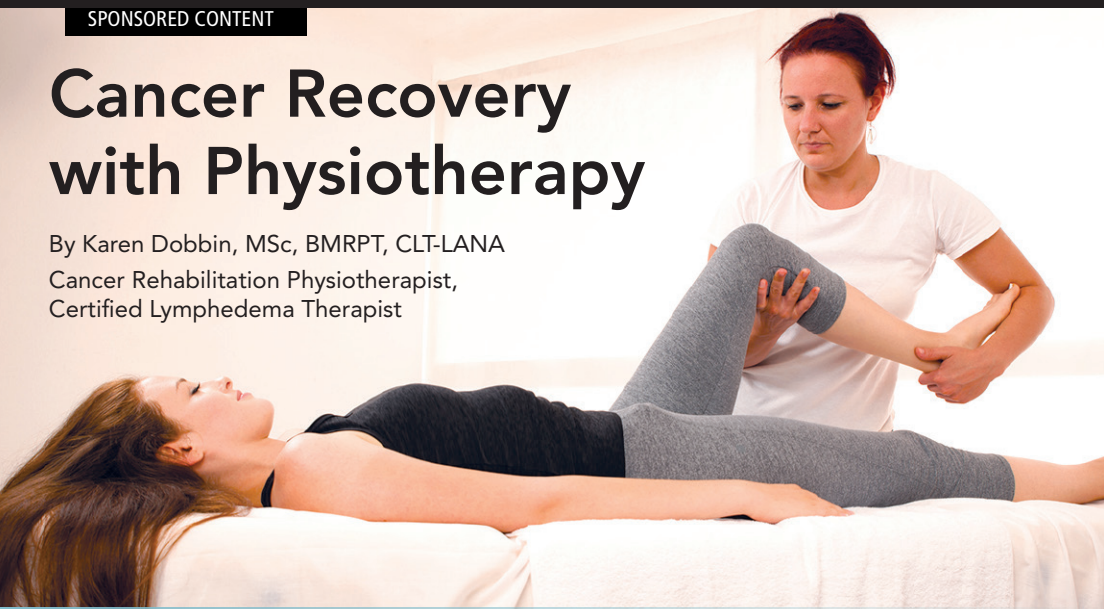


Cancer Recovery with Physiotherapy

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Cancer touches all of us. Someone you know – a grandparent, a parent, a neighbour, a friend, or maybe even yourself have been affected. What's more, it's estimated that one in every two Canadians are expected to develop cancer during their lifetime. The good news is the Canadian Cancer Society reports over 60 percent of Canadians diagnosed with the disease are expected to survive five years or more.

Unfortunately, the effects of cancer and cancer treatments can result in significant physical issues which include decreased function, independence and quality of life. Some of these physical challenges are muscle weakness, joint stiffness, fatigue, scar tightness, limited mobility, pain, balance impairments, swelling or lymphedema, as well as numbness and tingling.

In addition, many people experience mental health distress such as anxiety, depression and brain fog. Knowing there is a strong connection between our physical and mental well-being, and if we work to achieve improvements physically, we also benefit mentally.

Rehabilitation after cancer and cancer treatments can help with the recuperation and this is where physiotherapists play an integral role. Physiotherapists are uniquely qualified to advise, consult, assess and treat the broad range of conditions that limit function and mobility for optimal recovery.

One focus area is physical activity and fitness. Many people diagnosed with cancer know they need to get back to exercising, but simply don't know what they should be doing, what is safe to do or how to start an exercise program. Our

goal as physiotherapists is to help people return to their activities of daily living, recreation and work by guiding this process and providing individualized exercises to regain confidence, strength and stamina.

Because every individual diagnosed with cancer is a physiotherapy rehabilitation candidate, we can help the entire way throughout a cancer patient's journey.

So when is the best time to begin?

Actually, the time of diagnosis, before treatment begins is ideal to assess baseline mobility and function, to provide education and support, and to get people started on an exercise program. A physiotherapist can then meet with patients during and after treatments of surgery, chemotherapy and radiation to re-examine their mobility and function, to provide additional advice and exercises, and to help reduce or manage the side effects of treatment.

As well, physiotherapists can provide interventions as needed. Ongoing monitoring of patients for re-assessments, progression of exercise, advice will help them to incorporate healthy lifestyles habits for long-term wellness.

Whether you or someone you know has been touched by cancer, physiotherapy is here to support the recovery. It's wide-spreading and definitely has touched my life. I'm now a 12-year breast cancer survivor who has been passionately working in the area of cancer rehabilitation since my diagnosis.

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