

Possible Massage Contraindications

Contraindications exist in every modality. Contraindications can be full body, partial or both. A contraindication is a situation when massage should not be performed. Continuing with treatment may be more detrimental than beneficial and in some cases may cause serious medical problems.

If there is any doubt, the client needs to consult his/her physician prior to receiving a massage and be given from their physician a written note of consent, along with any other information that may be pertinent to any adjustments that may be needed for massage/bodywork.

Full Body:

- **General conditions resulting in full body: Increase circulation and lymphatic flow, which harm the client because the condition is systemic (affecting the body as a whole) and spreads through the body.**
- **Risks the health of the client or therapist because the condition is contagious.**
- **Example: undiagnosed illness*, flu, fever, contagious diseases, cancer, medications*, alcohol***
- **An Exception for viral illness may include: AromaTouch Technique is not a massage, but a technique using 8 oils creating stress reduction, immune enhancement, inflammatory response reduction, and then homeostasis (fancy word for balance). *check with the massage therapist if you are eligible for this during your illness**
- ***undiagnosed illness: when symptoms or illness remain undiagnosed, the consequences of massage are unknown and may benefit or harm the client: you must see a physician prior to receiving a massage.**
- ***medication & alcohol: require the liver to actively filter them out of the body. Receiving massage increases the amount of toxicity in the body, which taxes the liver and other organs.**
 - **After 6 to 8 hrs after last dose medication, client can schedule massage**

Partial Body:

- **Eliminates massage from only that particular part of the body where the concern exists.**
- **General conditions: increase lymph and blood flow but will not harm the client because the area of concern is not systemic. Will not spread to the therapist or client, or will not further damage the area, if the area itself is avoided (not touched or massaged).**
- **Examples: broken arm, rash, open wound, bruises, pregnancy**

Full & Partial:

- **Contraindications that are both full body and partial imply that a partial contraindication is affecting the whole body and massage should not be performed.**
- **Example: Imetigo, Poison Ivy**

GENERAL/POSSIBLE CONTRAINDICATIONS

Blood

- **Bleeding disorders such as hemophilia**
Massage may cause damage to tissues and result in bleeding.
- **Blood Clot**
 - **Thrombosis: This is a rare but potentially lethal blood clot in a vein. It is common in the calf muscle area. A deep, sore pain in the belly of the muscle may be a thrombosis. If this is massaged, it may dislodge, travel up the veins and damage the heart.**
- **High blood pressure** **AromaTouch Technique would be an exception*

Compromised Immune System

- **HIV or AIDS**
- **Organ transplant**
- **Lupus**

Contagious Disease

- **Infectious diseases** **AromaTouch Technique would be an exception*
Massage is not a good idea for someone coming down with the flu or diphtheria, for example, and to make matters worse, you expose yourself to the virus as well.
- **Infections of the skin and soft tissue: Bacterial infections, viral infections and fungal infections can be spread to other areas of the body by the therapist.**

Contagious Pathological Conditions

- **Impetigo**
- **Poison Ivy**
- **Blood or lymph diseases**
- **Cancer**

Disease of Circulatory System – FULL BODY

- **Phlebitis (vein inflammation)**
- **Hematoma**
- **Thrombophlebitis (inflammation of vein caused by blood clot)**
- **Low or high BP**
- **Heart disease**
- **Varicose veins**
- **Bruises**
 - **black and blue should be avoided**
 - **greenish-yellowish and fading** **light work is indicated*

Diabetes **See Disorders or Disease affecting Nervous System*

Disease of Lymphatic System

- **Cancer**
can spread through the lymphatic system, and because massage increases lymphatic circulation, it may potentially spread the disease as well. Simple, caring touch is fine, but massage strokes that stimulate circulation are not.

Disorders or Disease affecting Nervous System

- **Diabetes**
 - that is uncontrolled causing loss of sensation in extremities

Fever **Acupressure & AromaTouch Technique would be an exception*

- average body temp is 98.6
- massage increases body temperature

Hernia

- **Hernias are protrusions of part of an organ (such as the intestines) through a muscular wall. It's not a good idea to try to push these organs back inside. Surgery works better.**

Inflammation

- **Acute inflammatory disease**
 - rheumatoid arthritis in acute phase
 - **Massage may cause further inflammation.**
- **Acute inflammation of the joint**
- **Acute inflammation of large injury resulting from accident or surgery**
**wait 6-8 weeks*
- **Bursitis**
Inflammation to a bursa. A bursa is a small sack of fluid that helps tendons pass over bones at joints. If there is pain, swelling and redness over the skin then massage should be avoided. **partial contraindication*
- **Chronic inflammatory disease**
 - rheumatoid arthritis
- **Edema**
 - resulting of pregnancy (toxemia)
 - organ disorder
- **Gout**
- **Periostitis:**
This is inflammation of the sheath that surrounds the bone. Massage directly to the bone may cause irritation. You may be able to massage the surrounding muscles but stay well clear of the bone.

Injuries

- **Contusions**
These are impact injuries causing bleeding within the muscle. Massage to a contusion too soon after the injury may cause further damage and may lead to Myositis Ossificans (bone growth within the muscle).
- **Open wounds: Any cuts, lacerations or grazes. **This is a partial contraindication (so massage is possible, just not around the area that has a wound)***
- **Muscle ruptures**
 - **In the acute stage these may still be bleeding. Massage will increase bleeding and tissue damage and prolong recovery. After the initial 48 to 72 hours massage may be possible but it will depend on the extent of the injury.**
- **Muscle and tendon partial tears**
 - **Massage may be suitable after a minimum period of 48 hours, longer for more serious injuries.**
- **Myositis ossificans**
 - **A bad contusion or muscle rupture may begin to calcify (grow bone). Massage will make the damage worse.**
- **Tendon ruptures**
 - **The above also applies to tendon injuries. Complete ruptures will need surgery, not massage.**

Loss of Integrity

- **Osteoporosis**
- **Thin & delicate skin**
- **Damaged joints**
- **Areas that have undergone surgery**
 - **NOTE: unless specified by a physician, a client must wait six weeks after surgery prior to receiving massage.**
 - **Artificial blood vessels which are implanted through surgery should be avoided.**

Medications **Massage can be done 6 to 8 hrs after last dose*

- **Lose sensation and cannot tell pressure within massage**
- **Some medications may produce a side effect that causes a condition in the body:**
 - **Anti-coagulants: bruises & bleeds easily**
 - **Aspirin: thins the blood**
 - **Birth Control: it can cause blood clots**
 - **Dehydration**
 - **OTC medications for colds and flu containing pain medications or dehydrating components**

Osteoporosis **See Loss of Integrity*

Skin - PARTIAL

- **Sunburn**
- **Insect bites**
- **Acne**
- **Bruises**

Surgery **See Loss of Integrity*

Tumors

- **If you are unsure of any lumps and bumps in the muscle or skin then leave well alone. Most often these lumps are muscle spasms or fatty tissue. An experienced therapist can usually tell.**

Under the Influence of Alcohol or Recreational Drugs

- **require the liver to actively filter them out of the body. Receiving massage increases the amount of toxicity in the body, which taxes the liver and other organs.**

Undiagnosed Illness

- **Nerve pain**
- **Severe headaches**
- **Pain in the internal organs**
- **Numbness**
- **Inflammation**
- **Un-explained nausea**
- **Tremor or seizure**

Varicose veins:

- **Massage directly over varicose veins can worsen the problem. However, if you apply a very light massage next to the problem, always in a direction toward the heart, it can be very beneficial.**