Massage therapy is a soft tissue manipulation designed to provide relief from injuries and certain chronic or acute conditions. Massage can release painful muscle tension, improve circulation, boost the immune system, decrease anxiety and elevate mood.

A massage therapy appointment will be scheduled at the request of your child’s health care provider. Have your child drink at least 5 to 8 ounces of water before the massage. Do not give your child a large meal immediately before the massage. Before the treatment, the massage therapist will ask some questions about how your child feels. Special attention will be given to those areas of the body that will benefit most from massage.

The massage room will generally be warm and quiet. The massage treatment is usually done on a padded table designed for stability and comfort. Your child will be asked to lie on his right or left side, back or tummy. The therapist may use lotions or creams that are good for the skin and absorb well. Soft music may be used to encourage rest and relaxation. The length of the massage session will be 30-60 minutes. Some patients may require massage services in their hospital room; in that case, the massage therapist will provide a bedside treatment.

**After a massage:**

After a session, most patients feel very relaxed. Many experience freedom from aches and pains that have built up from tension, physical activity or inactivity. After an initial period of feeling sleepy or drowsy, patients often experience an increase in energy and a sense of well-being that can last for several days. Some people may experience a bit of muscle soreness 1-2 days after the treatment.

It is important to drink plenty of water before and after the massage to reduce possible post-massage symptoms. Most patients are thirsty immediately after the massage. *Your child is drinking enough water if the color of his urine is pale yellow to clear.* If your child does not drink enough water, he may have a headache after the massage. If that happens to your child, let the headache be a reminder to drink more water.

Massage is designed to be comforting and very relaxing. It is a good idea to allow some rest or quiet time after the treatment. The benefits of the massage will last longer if your child can remain calm and quiet after the treatment. Each subsequent massage session will allow a deeper and deeper relaxation response which will benefit your child’s overall health and well-being.

**Call your child’s massage therapist or health care provider if:**

- You have anything more than mild muscle soreness after his or her treatment.
- You have questions or concerns.