

Professional Massage Therapist

Certified Empowerment Coach

By Colleen Steele

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### LIFE COACHING

A life coach works with relatively healthy people who want to improve their lives in specific ways, such as changing careers, finding a healthy relationship, taking their business to a new level, losing weight or deepening their self-understand, for example. They deal with stress management as well as time management, goal setting and other key areas of change to help their clients lead more balanced lives that better reflect clients' personal values and priorities. Coaching differs from therapy in that the focus is more on the present and future than the past and more on goals and behaviors, and there is a more equal balance of power between the coach and client than between the typical therapist and client.

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# Colleen's E-Words



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Welcoming Possibilities

## YOUR MEDICATION LIST Adapted from Body Sense, Ruth Werner

Ruth Werner is author of A Massage Therapist's Guide to Pathology, which will be released in its fourth edition in 2009 (Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2005).

**Have you ever wondered why I ask for your medication list on the first visit and then *each subsequent visit I ask if there have been any changes or updates?***

Simply put, there can be an interaction between massage and medications. The massage practitioner may need to take some extra steps to design the best possible session for you, depending on what kinds of medications you take. *It is important to inform your massage therapist or bodywork practitioner not only that you take these medications, but also when your last dose was, and what the condition is that you are treating.*

This information allows the massage therapist to provide the best that massage has to offer you.

TYPE OF DRUG: Acetaminophen, NSAIDs, Salicylates

COMMON BRAND NAMES: Advil, Anacin, Aspirin, Bayer, Celebrex, Excedrin, Motrin, Nuprin, Tylenol, Relafen

IMPLICATIONS FOR MASSAGE: All of these medications reduce pain sensitivity, and some interrupt the inflammatory response. While this can be useful to quell painful symptoms, it can also make it harder to know when a massage therapist might be exerting too much pressure. Also, some of these medications tend to make people prone to chilling, or a little dizzy or lethargic after a message. Therapists can accommodate these challenges by adjusting the temperature of the room and reserving more time for you to transition back into the rest of your day.

More serious side effects of these medications include a risk of stomach or liver damage; these concerns should be pursued with your

doctor, of course.

TYPE OF DRUG: Steroidal anti-inflammatoires

COMMON BRAND NAMES: Cortisone, H-Hydrocort, Methotrexate Prednisol, Prednisone

IMPLICATIONS FOR MASSAGE: These are powerful and effective anti-inflammatories, but they carry more serious risks than other analgesics. In addition to relieving pain, they can suppress the immune system, thin the skin [the creams], cause water retention and swelling, and lead to muscle and bone wasting. These risks are usually seen with long-term usage, and your massage therapist can make adjustments accordingly to keep you safe & comfortable.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Colleen is an intuitive Stress Relief "artist" functioning as a Professional Massage Therapist and Certified Empowerment Coach.  
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**YOUR MEDICATION LIST, Continued****CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE MANAGEMENT**

**TYPE OF DRUG:** ACE inhibitors, beta blockers, calcium channel blockers, digitalis.

**COMMON BRAND NAMES:** Captopril, Cardine, Digitek, Digoxin, Inderal, Lotensin, Normodyne, Norvasc

**IMPLICATIONS FOR MASSAGE:** Dropping blood pressure too far can result in dizziness, fatigue, and lethargy. Massage sessions should be concluded with strokes that increase alertness and energy, and clients may need extra time to get back up to full speed. Also, many people who control their blood pressure with medications may not tolerate full-body immersions in hot water well; you should avoid using a hot tub until you have asked your doctor about whether this is a good idea.

**TYPE OF DRUG:** Cholesterol lowering drugs.

**COMMON BRAND NAMES:** Crestor, Lipitor, Tricor, Zacor

**IMPLICATIONS FOR MASSAGE:** All of these drugs work to lower levels of LDL (the so-called "bad cholesterol") by influencing liver and gallbladder function. A common side effect is constipation. Mild constipation can be relieved with gentle abdominal massage, but anything that lasts for more than a few days or is accompanied by acute pain should be addressed by your doctor, not your massage therapist. Other side effects can be more severe, and they can involve extreme muscle pain. This is another issue to discuss with your doctor, rather than your massage therapist.

**TYPE OF DRUG:** Clot management drugs

**COMMON BRAND NAMES:** Aspirin, Coumadin, Emaparin, Plavix

**IMPLICATIONS FOR MASSAGE:** Clot management drugs increase the possibility of bruising, even with light massage. Your massage therapist may adjust your session by choosing modalities that minimize this risk.

**TYPE OF DRUG:** Diuretics

**COMMON BRAND NAMES:** Lasix, Thalidone

**IMPLICATIONS FOR MASSAGE:** Diuretics act on the kidneys to help you shed extra water, easing the work your heart has to do. Rigorous massage may demand that your kidneys work even harder. You might be better off with gentle bodywork or shorter sessions that don't aim to move a lot of fluid through your system.

**DIABETES MANAGEMENT DRUGS**

**TYPE OF DRUG:** Glucose management drugs

**COMMON BRAND NAMES:** Diabinase, Glucophage, Glucotrol, Glyburide

**IMPLICATIONS FOR MASSAGE:** These drugs drop blood sugar, but the change tends not to be as extreme as with insulin. Nonetheless, it is a good idea to monitor blood sugar before and after a massage session to see if changes are significant.

**TYPE OF DRUG:** Insulin

**COMMON BRAND NAMES:** Humalog, Humulin Lantus, Novolin, Novolog

**IMPLICATIONS FOR MASSAGE:** Insulin is supplemented either through a pump that delivers a constant supply into the bloodstream or through injections. Either way, the application site should be avoided.

Massage tends to drop blood glucose levels, and so does insulin. This means that massage may serve you best when you are in the middle of your insulin cycle, rather than at the beginning or ending.

Doing a quick check of your blood sugar before and after your massage can let you know how bodywork affects you. Your massage therapist can keep some juice or candy in the office in case your blood sugar drops too quickly.

**ANTIDEPRESSANTS AND ANTIANXIETY DRUGS**

**TYPE OF DRUG:** Antianxiety medications

**COMMON BRAND NAMES:** Ativan, Lexapro, Luvox, Paxil, Valium, Xanax

**IMPLICATIONS FOR MASSAGE:** These drugs tend to emphasize the relaxation response — a goal of massage, too. This means the chance of overtreatment [leading to lethargy, dizziness, and sleepiness] is a risk that your practitioner must take steps to avoid.

**TYPE OF DRUG:** Antidepressants: monoamine oxidase inhibitors [MAOIs], tricyclics, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors [SSRIs], others.

**COMMON BRAND NAMES:** Celexa, Effexor, Elavil, Lexapro, Nardil, Parnate, Prozac, Serzone, Sinequan, Tofranil, Wellbutrin, Zoloft.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR MASSAGE:** Dizziness and drowsiness. . . A practitioner can adjust for these risks with shorter sessions, more stimulating strokes at close of session and by allowing more time to transition back into your day.