



# LYMPHEDEMA

## PREVENTION & MANAGEMENT

Lymphedema is an accumulation of lymphatic fluid in the interstitial tissue that causes swelling, most often in the arm(s) and / or leg(s), and occasionally in other parts of the body. The damage may be genetic or mechanical.

### There are two types of lymphedema

- Primary lymphedema is caused by a congenital defect in the lymphatic system
- Secondary lymphedema occurs after surgery, injury, disease or radiation therapy which result in a damaged lymphatic system

### Conditions that may cause lymphedema can include

- Breast, prostate, pelvic or skin cancer surgery with lymph node removal
- Cardiac bypass surgery with vein graft harvesting
- Venous insufficiency



### Symptoms of Lymphedema

Lymphedema can develop in any part of the body or limb(s).

### Signs or symptoms of lymphedema to watch out for include

- Swelling of limb and or body part (skin feels more firm)
- Redness
- A full sensation in the limb(s)
- Skin feeling tight
- Decreased flexibility in the hand, wrist or ankle
- Difficulty fitting into clothing in one specific area, or ring / wristwatch / bracelet tightness

### Goals of Lymphedema Treatment

- Maintain a normal or near normal size of limb
- Eliminate scar tissue
- Avoid reaccumulation of lymph fluid
- Prevent / eliminate infections

***Lymphedema can be controlled with careful and consistent treatment***

### Our approach to lymphedema management

- Evaluation completed by a certified Lymphedema therapist
- Manual lymphatic drainage techniques: used to redirect lymphatic fluid to the healthy lymph nodes
- A machine is applied over the affected limb to pump up the excess of lymphatic fluid from the periphery to the central lymph nodes
- Compression therapy: provide support and prevent fluid build up
- Exercise: decongestive exercises are performed by the patient to help further reduce swelling
- Patient education
- Nutritional counseling, encouraging a diet to decrease fluid buildup

### Wound Care & Training Center

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