

LYPHHEDEMA

Lymphatic tissue throughout the body drains fluid containing protein, water, fat cells, microorganisms and cell debris into the lymphatic vessels. This fluid becomes lymphatic fluid once it enters the lymphatic system and then travels to the lymph nodes for filtering. Lymph nodes and tissues also help make white blood cells to fight infection.

Secondary lymphedema is a long-term swelling condition that occurs due to the accumulation of fluid and proteins following surgical lymph node removal, or lymph node and vessel damage from radiation, trauma, or cancer. Lymphedema can occur in any area of the body with compromised lymphatic function. Following breast cancer treatment, including lymph node removal and/or radiation, the arm and/or breast are most often affected with lymphedema. Gynecological cancers and treatment with radiation and/or surgery involving lymph nodes in the pelvis increase the risk of developing leg swelling.

The incidence of lymphedema following cancer surgery is highly variable: 10% to 30% of people who have had axillary lymph node removal have been reported to be affected by lymphedema. A combination of lymph node removal and radiation treatment places a patient at a higher risk for developing lymphedema than for a person not undergoing these treatments, or for someone who undergoes only one of these treatments.

There is decreased risk of lymphedema after breast surgery if lymph nodes are not removed or if only a few (1-3) are taken. A surgical procedure called sentinel lymph node biopsy may be an option for many patients and is now considered standard of care in checking lymph nodes for cancer. If you have not had lymph node surgery ask your surgeon if this is an option for you.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT LYPHHEDEMA

Q. *Am I at risk for lymphedema?*

A. Anyone who has had lymph nodes removed, radiated and/or damaged is at risk for lymphedema. They are also at a higher risk for developing infections in the region that the removed lymph nodes used to drain, such as the arm and upper back and chest.

Q. *What can I do to reduce the risk of lymphedema and infections?*

- A.** There is no guarantee that lymphedema can be prevented, but there are steps you can take to reduce the risk:
- Avoid tight clothing and jewelry on the afflicted limb because it may prevent healthy lymphatic flow. If it leaves a mark on your skin, it is too tight.
 - Return to your previous activities slowly following surgery. Avoid activities such as contact sports, heavy lifting, and strenuous exercise, especially if you had not done these activities before surgery. Otherwise, gradually add them back into your daily routine and monitor any changes in size or softness of your arm.
 - Practice low impact exercise daily such as stretching, walking and swimming. Restoring your shoulder range of motion is an important way to help reduce your risk of developing lymphedema.
 - Use lotion on your affected arm, upper back, and chest every day. Nivea or Eucerin are excellent choices. Keeping your skin moist is a good way to help prevent infections.
 - Do not permit blood to be drawn, injections or IVs to be given, or blood pressure to be taken on the affected limb. Any puncture of your skin can allow bacteria on your skin to enter your system and cause an infection or worsen lymphedema.
 - Always practice meticulous hygiene and skin care; keep the skin well moisturized; use an antiseptic for cuts or scratches and keep them covered until they scab over.
 - Take steps to avoid insect bites, breaks in the skin or other injuries to the limb.
 - Consult your physician immediately if any sudden swelling, rash, itching, redness or increase in temperature occurs in the limb.
 - If lymphedema develops, it should develop slowly. If your skin is shiny and stretched from a quick onset of moderate to severe edema, especially if combined with redness, warmth and pain, you may have another condition causing swelling. Consult your doctor.

Q. *Is there a cure for lymphedema?*

- A.** At this time there is no cure for lymphedema. However, it can be managed effectively if treated early.

Q. *What can be done to treat lymphedema?*

A. A combination of techniques is used to treat and manage lymphedema. Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT) includes manual lymph drainage, skin care, compression bandaging, prescription compression garments (sleeves, vests, bras), and exercise with gentle muscle contractions. Pneumatic sequential compression pumping may also be used, depending your individual medical and care requirements

Q. *Who provides the treatment for lymphedema?*

A. An occupational or physical therapist who is certified in lymphedema treatment techniques. There is a certification by the course or school attended, and also national certification through the Lymphology Association of North America (CLT-LANA).

LYPHHEDEMA RESOURCES

American Cancer Society..... 800-227-2345

www.cancer.org

Free information regarding lymphedema is available upon request.

BioHorizon Medical, Inc. 866-914-5159

1970 East Grand Avenue, Suite 370, El Segundo, CA 90245

www.biohorizonmedical.com/

Provides medical equipment used to treat lymphedema. Dedicated to supporting patients and healthcare professionals to help improve the quality of life of those who live with these disorders.

Cedars-Sinai Outpatient Rehabilitation Center..... 310-423-9200

444 S. San Vicente, Suite 701, Los Angeles, CA 90048

www.csmc.edu

Provides physical therapy, massage, skin care, exercise, and compression garments for the effective treatment of lymphedema when compression therapy alone is not enough.

City of Hope Rehabilitation Services626-256-4673 ext. 62412

1500 East Duarte Road, Duarte, CA 91010

www.cityofhope.org

Provides a combination of treatments to manage lymphedema. These may include manual lymph drainage, compression bandaging, exercise, the use of a pneumatic sequential compression pump, and/or compression garments.

Dynamics Orthotics and Prosthetics **800-928-8821**
Los Angeles **213-383-9212**
 1830 W. Olympic Blvd., Suite 123, Los Angeles, CA 90006
Mission Hills..... **818-898-0234**
 11550 Indian Hills Road, Suite 211, Mission Hills, CA 901345
Torrance **310-781-1780**
 1001 W. Carson Street, Suite L, Torrance, CA 90502

www.walkagain.com

Resource center for lymphedema sleeves and compression garments.
 Service available in Spanish and Korean. An appointment is necessary.
 Medicare, Medi-Cal and most private insurances are accepted.

ENCORE Program

YWCA of Santa Monica/Westside **310-452-3881**

2019 14th Street, Santa Monica, CA 90405

www.smywca.org

Free exercise and pool exercise classes and peer support program for breast cancer patients, with lymphedema, during treatment and post-treatment.

Health-O-Med, Inc. Home Health Medical Equipment **323-654-6890**

7606 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90046

www.homemedicalequipmentla.com

Provider for lymphedema products. Service available in English and Russian. Medicare, Medi-Cal, Blue Cross and some private insurance are accepted.

Hollywood Physical Therapy Associates **323-957-9571**

7080 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 815, Hollywood, CA 90028

www.hollywoodPT.com

A certified lymphedema therapist and a member of the National Lymphedema Network and the American Physical Therapy Association. Medicare and some private insurance are accepted.

Huntington Hospital

Constance G. Zahorik Breast Center **626-397-2525**

50 Bellefontaine, Pasadena, CA 91105

www.huntingtonhospital.com

Lymphedema skilled physical therapists work with patients to provide evaluation, education, lymphatic mobilization and therapeutic exercise. Staff and patients work together to develop home programs that will decrease lymphedema and help in continuing the activities of daily living.

Intimate Image

Santa Monica **310-582-1960**
2907½ Santa Monica Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90404

Woodland Hills..... **818-876-7333**
22941 Ventura Blvd., Suite M, Woodland Hills, CA 91364

www.intimateimage.com

Resource center for lymphedema sleeves and compression stockings. Appointments are preferred. Medicare, Blue Cross, Blue Shield, Kaiser and most HMO's and private insurance accepted.

Long Beach Memorial Medical Center

Rehabilitation Institute's Lymphedema Program **562-933-9283**
2840 Long Beach Blvd., Suite 260, Long Beach, CA 90806

www.memorialcare.org

Teaches patients how to effectively manage their lymphedema on an independent basis. Individual sessions can last 60 to 120 minutes per day, depending on the severity of the condition. A team of licensed physical therapists certified in Complete Decongestion Therapy (CDT).

Lymphedema Center - Emily Iker, MD **310-829-7472**

2021 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 620 East, Santa Monica, CA 90404

www.lymphedemacenter.com

A diagnostic and treatment center for lymphatic disorders.

National Lymphedema Network **800-541-3259**

www.lymphnet.org

Provides education, information and referrals to lymphedema treatment centers and support groups.

Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center

Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation **909-865-9810**
1798 N. Garey Avenue, 1st Floor, Pomona, CA 91767

www.pvhmc.org

Certified physical therapists in the treatment of lymphedema provide comprehensive, decongestive, physical therapy, a treatment and prevention program for lymphedema, including education and skin care, scar tissue management, manual lymph drainage, compression, bandaging and exercises. A physician referral and, if required, insurance authorization is necessary prior to scheduling the first appointment.

**Presbyterian Intercommunity Hospital
Patricia L. Scheifly Breast Health Center**

Mariposa Boutique.....562-698-0811 ext. 5638

12393 Washington Boulevard, Whittier, CA 90606

www.pih.net

Resource center for lymphedema bras and sleeves, compression stockings, and other lymphedema supplies. Medicare, contracting HMO's and private insurances are accepted. Appointments are necessary.

South Bay Home Health Care 310-618-9555

1349 El Prado Avenue, Torrance, CA 90501

www.myhealthcenter.com

Features a large selection of lymphedema equipment for home treatment and rehabilitation programs.

TAG Physical Therapy 310-426-9570

111 Penn Street, El Segundo, CA 90245

www.tagpt.com

Specializes in rehabilitation for the cancer patient. This includes a comprehensive lymphedema program that provides manual lymph drainage, bandaging, education and garment fitting. TAG also provides orthopedic cancer rehabilitation for osteoporosis and post surgical patients.

Torrance Memorial Medical Center

Rehabilitation Services 310-517-4735

3330 Lomita Blvd., 5th Floor, West Tower, Torrance, CA 90505

www.torrancememorial.org

Treatment involves manual lymphatic draining, bandaging, self-massage, skin care, homecare program, exercise and referral for compression garment. Our goal for each patient is risk awareness and the ability to keep the extremity at a manageable size to maximize function.

West Hills Hospital

Center for Fitness and Rehabilitation..... 818-676-4600

7320 Woodlake Avenue, Suite 110, West Hills, CA 91307

www.westhillshospital.com

The Lymphedema Management Program is provided by specially trained and certified lymphedema specialists and is based on international standards of Complete Decongestive Therapy.