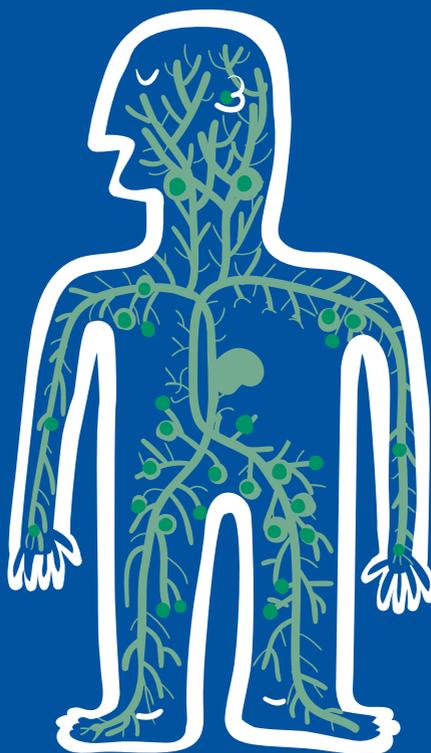


Lymphoedema

SO WHAT HAPPENS NOW?





What is Lymphoedema

Lymphoedema is a chronic swelling, usually of a limb (but can occur in any part of the body) that happens as a result of a failure to drain protein rich fluid (lymph) from the body tissues.

Why does it happen?

If the lymphatic system is abnormally formed or gets damaged, lymph accumulates in and below the skin layers resulting in swelling (oedema). Usually the blood system and lymphatic system work together to remove fluid from the skin and tissues but if they fail or are obstructed, a build-up can occur.



How does it affect me?

Build-up of lymphatic fluid can cause the affected limb or area to feel heavy, warm and to be more prone to infection. You may also notice a change in shape or texture of the area and, depending on the severity of the oedema, this can affect your hobbies or work.

What can I do?

Your therapist will outline a treatment plan for your lymphoedema that may include one or all of the cornerstones of lymphoedema care described in this leaflet. Once properly managed and with your continuing care, the effect of lymphoedema on your daily life can be minimised.

Manual Lymphatic Drainage



Medical or Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD) is a very gentle skin stretching technique or massage designed to move the skin in specific directions based on the underlying structure and physiology of the lymphatic system.

The stretching and massage techniques are designed to stimulate the lymphatic vessels which carry substances vital to the body's defences and remove waste products. The aim of MLD is to move fluid to an area where it can flow more freely.

Exercise



Exercise helps lymph fluid move through the lymphatic system, especially when wearing compression garments. This helps to reduce lymphoedema swelling because exercise makes the muscles contract and push lymph through the lymph vessels. Exercise also helps in maintaining full range of movement of affected limbs and aids well-being.

Compression Garments



Compression garments, such as a sleeve for an arm or a stocking for a leg, are an important way of controlling lymphoedema. They put pressure on tissues to stop fluid build-up and encourage fluid to drain.

Your compression garment should be fitted by a specialist to make sure it's effective. If it's too loose, it won't help with drainage. If it's too tight, it could restrict blood flow. Your lymphoedema specialist will select the type of garment and the grade of pressure appropriate for you. They will also explain how to put on and remove the garment.



Haddenham Patient Direct

www.hadhealth.com/shop

Patient Direct is a service Haddenham Healthcare provides to enable patients to access essential items for the continuing care of their lymphoedema. Items such as: kinesiology tape, skin-creams, glues, fitting aids and stocking wash.

Here to help

Your Lymphoedema Clinic

.....

Clinician

.....

Telephone

.....

Lymphoedema Support Network

www.lymphoedema.org



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www.hadhealth.com