
Lymphedema Therapy Fact Sheet

What is Lymphedema?

Lymphedema is an abnormal collection of fluid just below the skin. It most often occurs in the arm or leg, but can occur in other parts of the body as well. People affected with lymphedema often have difficulty with everyday tasks due to the size of their limb, which can reduce their independence and quality of life.

What are symptoms of Lymphedema?

Symptoms may include heaviness and tightness, aching, infections, and limited mobility.

What is Lymphedema Therapy?

Lymphedema Therapy is a specific type of physical therapy that includes 3 core treatment aspects:

1. *Manual lymphatic drainage massage* – a specialized manual technique designed to stimulate the uptake of lymph and move the fluid out of the body
2. *Medical compression bandaging*- this includes, but is not limited to, the use of low stretch bandaging systems to prevent refill of treated areas and continual stimulation of lymphatic structures
3. *An exercise program*- specific exercises to help utilize the muscle pumping action of the body to move fluid along lymphatic pathways