



Lymphedema Therapy Services

(Inpatient and Outpatient)

What is Lymphedema?

Lymphedema is an abnormal buildup of fluid that causes swelling, most often in the arms and legs. The condition develops when lymph vessels or lymph nodes are missing, impaired, damaged or removed.

What can cause Lymphedema?

The condition may occur following some surgeries, trauma, disease or radiation therapy, which results in damage to the lymph system. Occasionally it is due to congenital absence or malformation of the lymphatic system. Conditions that may result in lymphedema include:

- Cancer/cancer surgery
- Lymph node removal
- Cardiac bypass surgery with vein graft harvest
 - Venous insufficiency
 - Deep vein thrombosis
 - Obesity

Is there a cure?

Presently there is no cure for lymphedema. Effective management is possible through clinical treatment, education and individual efforts at home.

How can Therapy help?

We have a specially designed program to help patients manage lymphedema. It's called Complete Decongestive Therapy, or (CDT). This is a noninvasive treatment program consisting of four parts.

I. Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD)

This is a "hands on" manipulation of both the body tissue with lymphedema and adjacent selected areas. The therapist uses gentle pressure to empty and decompress obstructed lymph vessels. Such therapy allows lymph fluid to move around obstructed areas to aid in decreasing the size of limb.

II. Compression Bandaging

Once the MLD treatment is completed, the area is wrapped with layers of compression bandages. This helps the affected area maintain its reduced size.

III. Exercise

With the bandages in place, the patient will exercise to strengthen the muscles and improve lymph and circulatory system function. Active muscles enhance the process of pumping proteins, cells and water away from areas affected by lymphedema. The compression bandages provide support to the muscle's "pump system", prompting the absorption of excess lymphatic fluid.

IV. Skin Care and Education

Patients with lymphedema are at high risk for infection, so proper skin care and nutrition is critical to success. That's why the CDT treatment includes individualized education sessions. Patients become proficient in CDT techniques: wrapping, exercises and skin care to continue after completion of treatment.

Our Lymphedema Treatment Team consists of licensed Physical Therapists and Occupational Therapists who are certified in Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT)