

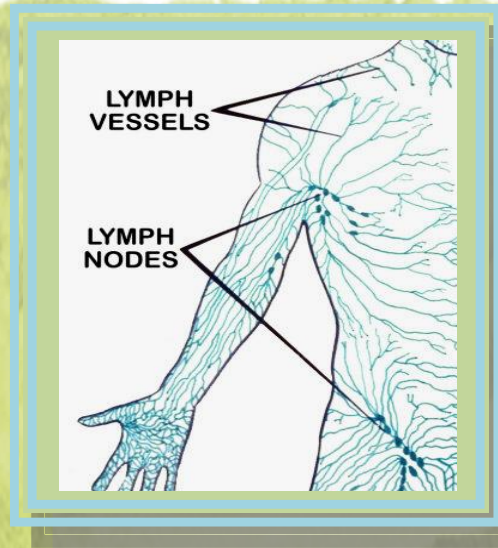
LYMPHEDEMA

Physical Therapy Treatment

How Can Physical Therapy Help?

While there is no cure for lymphedema, it can be managed through a combination of: early detection, education, clinical treatment, and home management. In early stages of lymphedema, when very mild swelling is present, the condition is managed by wearing compression garments, exercise, and elevation. If the condition progresses, physical therapy management may include:

- ◇ Manual lymph drainage (to help improve the flow of lymph from the affected arm or leg)
- ◇ Compression garment wear following lymphatic drainage
- ◇ Skin care (such as cleaning the skin of the arm or leg daily and moisten with lotion)
- ◇ Exercise to improve cardiovascular health and help decrease swelling in some cases
- ◇ Patient education (instruction in proper diet to decrease fluid retention and how to avoid
- ◇ injury and infection)
- ◇ Garment fitting



What Exactly is Lymphedema?

Edema, or swelling, may occur when there is an increase in the amount of fluid, proteins, and other substances in the body tissues.

Lymphedema occurs when the normal drainage of fluid is disrupted. It may be caused by a blockage or cut in the lymphatic system, usually the lymph nodes in the groin area and the armpit.

Blockages may be caused by infection, cancer, or scar tissue from radiation therapy or surgical removal of lymph nodes.



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