

Exercise

Regular exercise is important along with relaxation to keep your lymphoedema in check. It is important to exercise your affected limb on a daily basis. Your lymphoedema specialist can help with this information and tailor an exercise regime to your needs. Ideal general exercise would be gentle to keep joints mobile, circulation regulated, lymph moving and maintain good posture. Yoga, swimming or Tai chi are ideal, but it is important to find an exercise routine that suits you.

Cellulitis

Cellulitis is a sudden, non contagious infection of the skin. It causes redness, swelling, heat and can be painful. You may feel as though you are getting flu symptoms such as fever, shivers and muscular aches and pains, sometimes nausea and vomiting with a headache. The area of swelling may develop a rash and become tender and painful. It is not always apparent why this has happened i.e. as a result of a scratch or cut. If you do experience cellulitis, it is important that you consult your GP immediately for antibiotics, leave off hosiery and rest.

This leaflet is sponsored by **CREST**

CREST aims to bridge the gap between hospital and home and enhance the quality of life for people affected by cancer.

To make an appointment please contact our fully trained MLD Therapist:

Deborah Napier (MLDuk)
MLD/CDT Practitioner (VODDER)
01932 562472

CREST also offers:

- Complementary therapies
- Counselling
- Relaxation Days
- General advice and guidance for cancer patients and their carers

For more information, visit our website
www.crestcancer.org.uk

To contact **CREST** please:

call 01784 613971

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CREST
Cancer Support

*Enhancing the lives of cancer patients and their carers
in Runnymede, Elmbridge and Spelthorne*

Do You Suffer With Lymphoedema?

Lymphoedema is a chronic swelling which can affect any part of the body

How Can I Help Myself?

- Skincare
- Exercise
- Massage
- Compression

What Help Is Available?

- Skincare advice
- Exercise advice
- Manual Lymphatic Drainage
- Compression hosiery

What Is Lymphoedema?

Lymphoedema is a chronic swelling that can affect any part of the body, although more usually it affects the arms and the legs.

The lymphatic system is a secondary circulatory system which runs alongside the veins and arteries. The lymphatic system helps to drain away proteins, fluid and waste from the tissues and is part of the body's immune system which helps to fight infection.

Lymphoedema can occur as a result of disruption to the lymphatic system, either by surgery, radiation, trauma or infection. This is called *secondary lymphoedema*.

Lymphoedema can also occur because the lymphatic system has not developed properly from birth. This is called *primary lymphoedema*.

When lymphoedema occurs it is important to get advice as soon as possible. Early detection enables the condition to be managed more easily and allow for the least disruption to daily life.

Manual Lymphatic Drainage and Combined Decongestive Therapy

Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD) is an advanced specialised massage, which is carried out by specially trained practitioners to alleviate the symptoms of lymphoedema.

MLD uses gentle, rhythmical pumping techniques which move skin in the direction of lymph flow.

MLD stimulates the lymph vessels to carry fluids away at a faster pace.

MLD redirects lymph where pathways are obstructed and therefore reduces swelling.

In some cases an intensive treatment using multi-layer bandaging (called Combined Decongestive Therapy or CDT) may be advisable to support the tissues throughout the treatment.

MLD helps to break down hard areas of fibrotic tissue which cause further restriction of lymph flow.

MLD can improve the appearance of scars.

SLD or Simple Lymphatic Drainage may be taught by the therapist on a one-one basis to assist with symptoms If appropriate.

Skincare

It is important to keep the skin in as good condition as possible to avoid infection.

Wash with soap-free cleansers, pat dry, do not rub the skin. Moisturise daily with a perfume free cream. Avoid the skin becoming dry which may encourage infection.

If having injections, blood pressure checks or blood samples taken, inform the Health Professional of the condition to avoid the affected limb being used. Wear gloves when working in the kitchen or garden

Try to avoid cutting, scratching or bruising the skin as this could make the skin more susceptible to infection. Electric razors may be beneficial.

Check for signs of redness or infection. If concerned liaise with Practice Nurse /GP/ Specialist Nurse

Avoid, where possible, carrying heavy bags with the affected limb. Tight clothing can also be a problem.

Where possible avoid extreme heat or cold. Use a factor 15+ sunscreen. Saunas, hot baths, mineral or mud baths should be avoided.

Always wear compression hosiery when taking a flight and throughout the day when advised.

Always consult a Health Professional if you have any concerns.