

About Lymphedema (Swelling of the Arm)

The removal and/or radiation treatment of axillary lymph nodes as part of treatment for breast cancer can lead to lymphedema. Lymphedema can cause painful swelling of the arm or hand on the side of surgery. Lymphedema can develop weeks, months or even years after treatment and can vary in its severity. To reduce your chances of developing lymphedema, precautions can be taken, such as avoiding an infection or injury to the affected arm.

Answers to these questions will help you understand lymphedema.

Q: What are my chances of getting lymphedema?

A:

Q: What signs or symptoms of lymphedema should I watch for and tell you about?

A:

Answers to these questions will tell you what you can do to avoid lymphedema.

Q: If I get a shot or get my blood pressure taken from the affected arm, will I get lymphedema?

A:

Q: What exercises should I do (or avoid) to prevent lymphedema? What else can I do?

A:

Q: What else can I do to avoid lymphedema (i.e., use sunscreen, insect repellent and garden gloves)?

A:

Q: If I get a cut, burn or insect bite on the affected arm, what can I do to protect myself?

A:

Q: If I do get lymphedema at some time, is permanent?

A:

Answers to these questions will help you understand the treatment for lymphedema.

Q: What is the first step in treating lymphedema?

A:

Q: Should I wear a compression sleeve? Do I have to wear it at all times, even at night? What about on an airplane?

A:

Q: What is manual lymph drainage (MLD)? When is wrapping used to treat lymphedema? Please explain how these treatments work. Will my insurance company pay for these treatments?

A:



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