

# **Lymphedema Management**

## *General Tips*

### **Avoid any injuries to your skin**

Take care when working in your garden, with pets, or doing housework to avoid any cuts or scrapes. Even small injuries can be an entryway for infections.

### **Avoid mosquito bites**

Since a single bite can cause an infection, it is important to wear insect repellent.

### **Use caution when exercising**

Avoid straining and strenuous exercise.

### **Avoid heat**

Very hot showers, saunas, hot packs on your affected extremity, sunbathing, and massages can have negative effects on your lymphedema as they promote increased blood flow which may lead to swelling.

### **Inform all of your medical providers that you have lymphedema**

Injections, blood pressure, acupuncture, etc. should be avoided on your affected extremity.

### **Nutrition**

While there is no special diet for lymphedema, low salt, low fat diets are recommended as obesity can also have a negative effect on lymphedema.

### **Travel**

With air travel, lower cabin pressure can increase swelling. Before traveling by air, you may need to apply an additional bandage on top of your garments. Speak to your physical therapist with questions prior to air travel. Avoid mosquito infested areas to reduce risk of infection.

### **Clothing**

Avoid restrictive, tight clothing and jewelry.

### **General tips**

Always wear compression garments during the day and, if necessary, at night. Elevate your limb as often as possible during the daytime. Perform your exercises daily.

### **Contact your doctor immediately**

If you have any signs of infection such as fever, chills, and/or red, hot skin. Report any signs of a fungal infection, including itching, burning, redness, moisture or cracking of the skin.