

# Lymphedema Management

## FAQs

### **How do I become a patient?**

Consult with your provider if you are experiencing symptoms of Lymphedema. If your physician determines that your symptoms are caused by Lymphedema, you may ask for a referral to schedule an evaluation with our certified Lymphedema therapist. Once you receive your referral, call our specialty clinic at 425-831-2376 to set up an appointment.

### **What happens during the evaluation?**

Evaluations last 60-90 minutes and consist of a thorough assessment of medical history, measurements of affected and unaffected limbs, photographs to track progress and explanation of treatment.

### **What happens during a treatment session?**

Treatment sessions are 3-5 days per week, Monday through Friday, in the first phase of treatment and last 60-90 minutes. The first phase can last from 2-4 weeks, depending on your needs. Each session will include manual lymph drainage which may last 45 minutes, followed by cleansing and moisturizing the affected extremity. The session ends with compression wrapping. Compression bandages must be worn until the next treatment session to prevent the fluid from re-accumulating. After the limb is wrapped, the patient will be taught an exercise program to continue at home which encourages movement of the lymph fluid out of the affected limb.

### **What type of clothing should be worn during treatment?**

Patients should wear clothing that allows unrestricted movement, but is comfortable and loose-fitting to allow compression bandages. We will need to see the entire area that is experiencing swelling as well as the abdomen and chest in some cases. We have gowns available if needed, but please wear clothing that allows as much access as possible since manual lymph drainage is completed directly on the skin.

### **What happens after Phase One?**

After swelling has reduced to the maximum amount, patients are then fitted for compression garments. These are garments that must be worn every day, and in most cases at night as well, after patients are discharged. Garments typically need to be replaced every 6 months. Patients will follow up with their therapist after 6 months or sooner if any issues arise.

### **Is the treatment covered by insurance?**

Treatment is covered by insurance under a patient's outpatient physical therapy benefit. Because insurance policies vary, patients should check with their insurance carrier to determine the level of coverage. We will verify this information when you schedule an evaluation. While evaluation and treatment is covered by insurance, compression garment coverage is dependent on insurance. Some private insurance carriers and Washington State Medicaid do cover garments, while Medicare does not. It is important to check with your insurance to determine your eligibility before starting treatment.