



HOPE Lymphedema
Treatment Center, PLLC
Lymphedema Prevention Program
Lymphedema Management Program

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HopeLymphedema.com



Tammy Sweed, MLDT
Founder of HOPE
Helping Out People with Edema

Tammy Sweed has been a Registered Massage Therapist with the Texas State Board of Health since 1993. In 1996 she studied in Austria where she became a Dr. Vodder Certified Manual Lymphatic Drainage Therapist.

Ms. Sweed is a Sponsor of the National Lymphedema Network (NLN) and a member of NAVALT, Ft. Bend Chamber of Commerce, American Business Woman's Assoc.

18 Steps to Prevention

Lymphedema can occur immediately post-operatively, within a few months, a couple of years, or 20 years or more after cancer therapy. With proper education and care, lymphedema can be avoided or, if it develops, kept well under control. *The following instructions should be reviewed carefully pre-operatively and discussed with your physician or therapist.*

FOR LOWER EXTREMITIES - Who is at risk?

Anyone who has had gynecological, melanoma, prostate or kidney cancer in combination with inguinal node dissection and often, radiation therapy.

- 1.** DO NOT IGNORE any slight increase of swelling in the toes, foot, ankle, leg, abdomen, or genitals - consult your doctor immediately.
- 2.** NEVER allow an injection or a blood drawing in the affected leg(s). Wear a Lymphedema Alert necklace.
- 3.** Keep the edemic leg or at-risk leg, spotlessly clean. Use lotion (*Eucerin, Lymphoderm*) after bathing. Be gentle when drying. Make sure it's dry in the creases and between toes.
- 4.** AVOID vigorous, repetitive movements against resistance with the affected legs.
- 5.** DO NOT wear socks, stockings or undergarments with tight elastic bands.
- 6.** AVOID extreme temperature changes when bathing, or sunbathing - no saunas or hot tubs. Keep the legs protected from the sun.
- 7.** AVOID any type of trauma - bruising, cuts, sunburn or other burns, sports injuries, insect bites, cat scratches.
- 8.** AVOID cutting your cuticles when manicuring your nails.
- 9.** EXERCISE is important, but consult with your therapist. Do not over tire a leg at risk; if it starts to ache, lie down and elevate it. Walking, swimming, light aerobics, bike riding or yoga is recommended.
- 10.** If traveling on an airplane, lymphedema or at risk patients should wear a compression stocking. Additional bandages may be required on a long flight. Increase fluid intake while in the air.
- 11.** Use an electric razor to remove hair from legs. Maintain razor properly, replacing heads as needed.
- 12.** Patients with lymphedema should wear a well-fitted compression sleeve during all waking hours. At least every 4-6 months, see your therapist for follow-up.
- 13.** WARNING - If you notice a rash, itching, redness, pain, increase of temperature or fever, see your doctor immediately - it could be a sign of the beginning or worsening of lymphedema.
- 14.** MAINTAIN your ideal weight with a well-balanced, low sodium, high-fiber diet. Avoid smoking and alcohol. Lymphedema is a high protein edema, but eating too little protein will not reduce the protein element in the lymph fluid; rather, this may weaken the connective tissue and worsen the condition. Diet should contain easily digested protein (*chicken, fish or tofu*).
- 15.** Always wear closed shoes - high tops or well-fitted boots are highly recommended. No sandals or slippers, don't go barefoot. Dry feet carefully after swimming.
- 16.** See a podiatrist once a year to check for and treat fungi, ingrown toenails, calluses, pressure areas, athlete's foot.
- 17.** Wear clean socks and hosiery at all times.
- 18.** Use talcum powder on feet, especially if you perspire a great deal. Talcum will make it easier to pull on your compression stockings. Wear rubber gloves when pulling on stockings. Powder behind the knee helps prevent rubbing and irritation.

"Our goal is to make a difference in your life"