

Gay Lee Gulbrandson CLT-LANA



# LYMPHEDEMA Wellness Manual Patient Handbook



# LE WELLNESS MANUAL PATIENT HANDBOOK

Tab Color

## CONTENTS

<b>Start Here</b> →	PATIENT ACTION GUIDE	1
<b>Patient Pages Sec. 1</b>	LYMPHEDEMA OVERVIEW	2
<b>Section 2</b>	ASSESSMENT [In WELLNESS MANUAL]	5
<b>Patient Pages Sec. 3</b>	INDIVIDUAL TREATMENT PROTOCOL	6
<b>Patient Pages Sec. 4</b>	RISK FACTORS, PREVENTION	14
<b>Patient Pages Sec. 5</b>	CDT COMBINED DECONGESTIVE THERAPY	22
<b>Patient Pages Sec. 6</b>	OTHER TREATMENTS	25
<b>Patient Pages Sec. 7</b>	EXERCISES	28
<b>Patient Pages Sec. 8</b>	QUALITY of LIFE	29
<b>Patient Pages Sec. 9</b>	RESOURCES	30
<b>Section 10</b>	MLD TOPIC CARD EXAMPLE	35
<b>Appendix A</b>	SOURCES [In WELLNESS MANUAL]	
<b>Appendix B</b>	GLOSSARY [In WELLNESS MANUAL]	
<b>Patient Appendix C</b>	REFERENCES	38
<b>Appendix D</b>	CE COURSE [In WELLNESS MANUAL]	
<b>Appendix E</b>	FORMS [In WELLNESS MANUAL]	
<b>Appendix F</b>	INDEX	
	ORDER A <b>LE WELLNESS MANUAL</b>	39

**THE LYMPHEDEMA WELLNESS MANUAL PATIENT HANDBOOK**

**Interactive LE Management for Patients & Therapists**



# START HERE

If you suspect or have confirmed secondary lymphedema (LE), the following steps are necessary to obtain the care you need to control and manage your condition.

If you do not receive the necessary care, your lymphedema will progress, and may become life threatening over time. If you have primary lymphedema, these steps may also help control your LE. Continue all care, medicine, and instructions prescribed by your physician.

 Locate a physician with specialization in treating LE (a “lymphologist”), and have an evaluation for LE. [Page 29] 

 Locate a Certified Lymphedema Therapist (CLT), preferably certified by the Lymphology Association of America (CLT-LANA). Have an evaluation by a CLT as soon as possible, a necessary step. [Page 29] 

 Read this **LE WELLNESS MANUAL PATIENT HANDBOOK** before your next appointment. Write down any questions you have. [Page 12] 

 After your therapist assessment use the Wellness Action Plan to design your LE management plan. [Pages 6-11] 

 Ask your therapist to discuss the Risk Factors guide to reduce infections and to limit risk exposure. [Pages 14-16] 

 If you, your physician, and your therapist created a LE management plan, use it! [Page 6; and page 20] 

 With your Wellness Action Plan now in place: 

- Review *Best Practices* ratings and applicability. [Page 22 on.]
- Become active – join a support group or LE association in your area. [Page 30]

The complete **LYMPHEDEMA WELLNESS MANUAL** includes:

- Expert guidance, consensus, research, best practices, therapy ratings, forms
- Exercise plans, check-lists
- Quality of Life recommendations
- Most aspects of secondary LE care

To enhance your LE management skills purchase a **LYMPHEDEMA WELLNESS MANUAL**

## SECTION 1: THE LYMPH SYSTEM & LYMPHEDEMA

Patients can employ these select pages from the [LYMPHEDEMA WELLNESS MANUAL](#).  
A LE therapist can implement this material with you to manage your condition.

### Tell me about Lymphedema!

Lymphedema is the swelling found in different parts of the body due to insufficiency of the lymph vessel system. Lymphedema is most often found in an extremity of the body, i.e. legs or arms. Lymphedema also occurs in the trunk, abdomen, face or genital area. Protein rich fluid accumulates in the dermis of the skin, which can have pathological and clinical consequences if left untreated. Lymphedema can become a life-long condition and must be treated early and consistently.

#### Causes

Lymphedema is either primary or secondary. Primary lymphedema develops from congenital malformation of the lymphatic system that may be present at birth or may develop in later life, often during puberty or pregnancy.

Secondary lymphedema is far more frequent in the developed world population and often follows surgery or radiotherapy for treatment of cancer. Surgery including the removal of lymph nodes, such as mastectomies or lumpectomies along with the removal and/or radiation treatment of the axillary (armpit) lymph nodes, is a frequent cause of secondary lymphedema. Other causes of lymphedema include trauma or infections involving the lymph system. Venous insufficiencies may also contribute to the onset of lymphedema (phlebolymphostatic edema or phlebedema).

Primary or secondary lymphedema may affect upper or lower extremities. Generally legs are involved more often with primary lymphedema, and secondary lymphedema more often involves the arms.

#### Symptoms

In the early stages of lymphedema (latent stage and stage I) swelling may be temporarily reduced by elevation of the limb. Stage I is considered reversible. However, the protein-rich edema can become chronic and cause a progressive thickening of the edematous tissue. This is known as lymphostatic fibrosis and occurs in stage II lymphedema, and is not reversible. Additional complications such as fungal infections, continued hardening of the tissue, and greater congestion causes a severe increase in swelling of the extremity. This is stage III lymphedema, or elephantiasis.

Lymphedema, whether primary or secondary, usually affects just one extremity; if both extremities (for example, both legs), are involved, the swelling will be asymmetrical.

#### See Your Physician

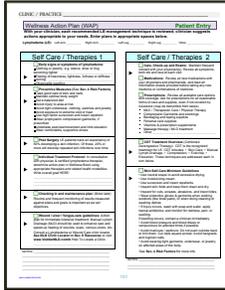
If you observe signs of an infection (fever, chills, red or hot skin, or pain), fungal infections, or if you observe any other changes that may relate to your lymphedema, see your physician. Let your health care team know that you have lymphedema - avoid injections or acupuncture in your affected extremity. Blood pressure or blood draws/injections should be performed on the unaffected limb.

#### General Suggestions

Wear your compression garments daily; if necessary wear your bandages at night; use elevation as often as possible during the day; perform prescribed exercises daily; and consult your doctor or therapist whenever you have questions about your lymphedema.

## SECTION 3: INDIVIDUAL TREATMENT PROTOCOL

Patients can employ these select pages from the [LYMPHEDEMA WELLNESS MANUAL](#).  
A LE therapist can implement this material with you to manage your condition.



**Patient:** With your therapist, each LE therapy or management technique is considered; therapist suggests treatments appropriate to you and your preferences. Be candid about what you are willing and able to do to manage your LE.



**6 Page Form**  
**1 Page Form**

**Patient:** To manage your lymphedema (LE), we explore all your needs and concerns. Your lymphedema therapist or physician strives to make this process as easy and collaborative as possible. Thank you for your willing participation.

The following is an interactive review of many possible strategies to support your individual LE management needs including self-care, treatments, and more.

You will need to meet with a trained professional therapist to create this Wellness Action Plan, as you cannot do this on your own.

Be sure to locate a “CLT-LANA” or other trained professional who has current in-depth experience with lymphedema, who will perform a full assessment of your condition [See Section 2 of the [LYMPHEDEMA WELLNESS MANUAL](#)] prior to creating your Wellness Action Plan, and is available to help you implement that Plan.

An effective Wellness Action Plan will involve a lot of participation by you, and frequent adjustment of the treatment protocols recommended, as your condition changes over time.

**Patient:** References to further information and page numbers in the WAP form refer to the [LYMPHEDEMA WELLNESS MANUAL](#).

Note: Many therapies described in this section have a Best Practices rating symbol

Example of top rating:



**Patient/Therapist:** The following **Individual Treatment Protocol: Wellness Action Plan** 6-page form is also available as a 3 page short form in the [LYMPHEDEMA WELLNESS MANUAL](#).



**Individual Treatment Protocol: Wellness Action Plan**

**Patient:** You will need to meet with a Certified Lymphedema Therapist (CLT) to create this plan. Adaptation and adjustment of the Wellness Action Plan is assumed. A thorough intake is necessary to select the best LE care recommendations. Regular follow-up is essential. References in gray refer to further information found in the full **LYMPHEDEMA WELLNESS MANUAL**.

Patient Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Lymphedema (LE): Left Arm \_\_\_\_\_ Right Arm \_\_\_\_\_ Left Leg \_\_\_\_\_ Right Leg \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Priority Scale 1 - 3	Therapist Notes	Self Care /Therapies 1
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>How will I know if secondary LE is developing, either post-surgery or for anyone at risk?</b></p> <p>What are the early signs of LE? There is a better chance of limiting the effects of LE through early detection / diagnosis.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Early signs or symptoms of lymphedema:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Clothing or jewelry, e.g. sleeve, shoe or ring, becoming tighter _____</li> <li>■ Feeling of heaviness, tightness, fullness or stiffness _____</li> <li>■ Aching _____</li> <li>■ Observable swelling _____</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Post surgery and all patients LE prevention.</b></p> <p>What should I do before I actually develop LE? What should I do if I suspect latent LE? What are the risks of aggravating my existing lymphedema?</p> <p><b>Therapist:</b> Perform assessment. If LE is present, continue through the entire checklist.</p> <p>See <b>Section 5 Patient Education</b> for information.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Preventive Measures (See Section 4 Risk Factors)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Take good care of skin and nails</li> <li>■ Maintain optimal body weight</li> <li>■ Eat a balanced diet</li> <li>■ Avoid injury to area at risk</li> <li>■ Avoid tight underwear, clothing, watches and jewelry</li> <li>■ Avoid exposure to extreme cold or heat</li> <li>■ Use high factor sunscreen and insect repellent</li> <li>■ Wear prophylactic compression garments, if prescribed</li> <li>■ Undertake exercise/movement and limb elevation</li> <li>■ Wear comfortable, supportive shoes</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Post surgery patients (secondary LE)</b></p> <p>What are the risks of aggravating my existing lymphedema?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Secondary LE:</b> Breast cancer patients have an expectancy of 50% developing a skin infection. Of those, 20% or more will develop repeated skin infections over time.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Health Goal &amp; Wellness Manual</b></p> <p>Patient evaluates own health status, decides on desired outcome, and sets goals to achieve the outcome, while working with therapist. Set goals for each portion of the Wellness Action Plan HERE: _____</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Individual Treatment Protocol:</b> In consultation with physician &amp; lymphedema therapist, determine action plan in <b>WELLNESS MANUAL</b> using appropriate therapies and related health modalities. Enter overall goal HERE: _____</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Self monitoring &amp; therapist monitoring needed for improving wellness and achieving goals</b></p> <p>Monitoring your LE care should be scheduled.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Checking in and maintenance plan:</b> (More later)</p> <p>Routine and frequent monitoring of results measured against plans and goals is important as we set objectives.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Wound, Ulcer, or Fungus present?</b></p> <p>If present, consultation with wound care clinic / physician / specialist is needed. MLD often will greatly assist in wound healing, scars, etc.</p> <p>See <b>Section 9 Resources</b> for more information.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Wound / ulcer / fungus-care guidelines:</b> Action plan for immediate intensive treatment. Manual lymph drainage (MLD) may be used to enhance care and speed-up healing of wounds, scars, venous ulcers, etc. Consult a Lymphedema or Wound Care clinic now. See <b>NLN Clinic Locator in Section 9 Resources</b> or visit <a href="http://www.VodderMLD.com/b">www.VodderMLD.com/b</a> How To Locate a Clinic.</p>



# MY TURN

## Things to know about my Lymphedema – review of my progress so far:

My turn to interview the therapist!

- What type of lymphedema do I have (primary or secondary)? \_\_\_\_\_
- What other conditions / symptoms do you suspect need further diagnosis by a physician?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How can you be sure that my swelling is due to lymphedema and not another underlying medical condition? \_\_\_\_\_
- What further investigation might be needed or recommended to establish the diagnosis?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What is the stage of my lymphedema (Stage 0, 1, 2, or 3)? *\_ See Appendix* \_\_\_\_\_
- What are the treatment options for my lymphedema? *\_ See Section 3, 5, 6, 7* \_\_\_\_\_
- Who else will be involved in my treatment and how will I put a team together? \_\_\_\_\_
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each of the treatments? *\_ See Section 5 CDT* \_\_\_\_\_
- What monitoring will be appropriate to measure the effectiveness of my treatment plan?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How long will I have to continue treatment? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who should I contact with questions? \_\_\_\_\_
- What types of activities should I avoid during and after treatment? *\_ See Section 4 Risks* \_\_\_\_\_
- What other types of support do you offer or suggest for patients with lymphedema? \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to work with my physician and dietician in conjunction with my MLD therapist.

I am still wondering about: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

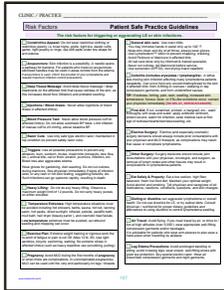
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Patient:** Please fill out this page after completing the **Section 3** Wellness Action Plan (WAP) with your therapist. This may bring out unaddressed concerns in a helpful way, and assist you to obtain answers.

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 4: RISK FACTORS

Patients can employ these select pages from the [LYMPHEDEMA WELLNESS MANUAL](#).  
A LE therapist can implement this material with you to manage your condition.



**Patient:** Review risks with your therapist using the Risks checklist. Read and ask questions. Be cautious, appropriate to your susceptibility to risks, while still engaging fully in an active life.



**3 Page Form**  
**1 Page Form**

**Patient:** You will need to meet with a trained therapist to review these risks. References to further information and page numbers in the Risks form refer to the [LYMPHEDEMA WELLNESS MANUAL](#).

Note: Some Risk Factors described in this section have a Best Practices rating.

**Patient/Therapist:** The following **Risk Factors: Risk Reduction & Safe Practices Guidelines** 3-page form is also available as a 1 page short form in the [LYMPHEDEMA WELLNESS MANUAL](#).

From the [LYMPHEDEMA WELLNESS MANUAL](#):

### Understanding Lymphedema

#### Healthy Fluid Balance

Filtration (including active transport) provides the tissues with fluids and proteins from the arterial capillaries for cell nourishment. If the lymph system is healthy it will carry away excess fluid and wastes.

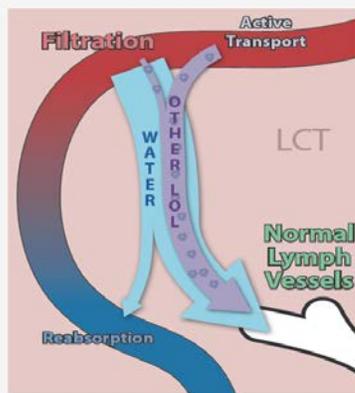
Active Transport: Movement of molecules across the capillary wall into the tissue.

Filtration: The movement of fluid and nutrients from arterial capillaries into tissues.

LCT: Loose Connective Tissue including the dermis layers.

LOL: Lymph Obligatory Load (or LL, Lymphatic Load) is the interstitial fluid, proteins, and wastes that the lymph vessel system serves to remove from the LCT.

ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF: Leif B. Meyer



### Understanding Lymphedema

#### High Protein Edema

Filtration (including active transport) fills the tissues with fluid and proteins from the arterial capillaries to provide cell nourishment. If the lymph system is unable to carry away excess fluid and wastes, high protein edema results.

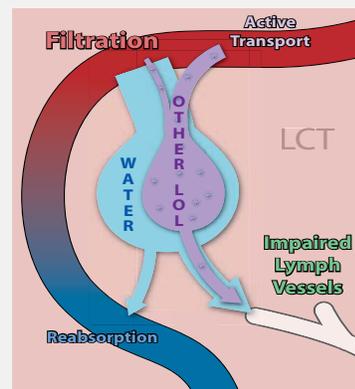
Active Transport: Movement of molecules across the capillary wall into the tissue.

Filtration: The movement of fluid and nutrients from arterial capillaries into tissues.

LOL: Lymph Obligatory Load is the quantity of interstitial fluid, proteins, and wastes that the lymph vessel system is supposed to remove from the tissues.

Reabsorption: Some fluid may be absorbed by the venous capillary.

ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF: Leif B. Meyer





**Risk Factors: Risk Reduction & Safe Practices Guidelines**

Patient Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed on (date) <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Risk or Trigger</b>                      May trigger or aggravate lymphedema, or lead to cellulitis / erysipelas.</p>	<p><b>Safe Practice Guidelines 1</b>                      Recommendations in brief for lymphedema (LE) patients.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Constrictive Apparel</b>                      Allow proper lymphatic flow on skin surface.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Constrictive Apparel:</b> Do not wear restrictive clothing or restrictive jewelry i.e. knee highs, girdle, tight bra, elastic cuffs, garter, tight jewelry or rings; use soft pads under bra straps for arm edema. See Wellness Manual personal articles access list.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Acupuncture</b>                      Should be avoided. Must not be allowed in affected limb or nearby trunk quadrants.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Acupuncture</b> induced skin infections are a possibility.                      ▶ Inserting a needle into an edema opens a pathway for bacteria. For patients who insist on acupuncture, sterilized needles can be inserted into a sterilized area remote from the affected area. If acupuncture is used, inform the acupuncture provider of your lymphedema and request maximum infection control precautions.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Deep Tissue Massage</b>                      Avoid deep massage or activity causing redness of skin or bruising to the affected limb(s). Also see Pg 18-19 Patient Handbook.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Deep Tissue Massage:</b> Avoid deep tissue massage on the affected limb and quadrant, any that cause redness of the skin; this increases blood flow (filtration) and promotes swelling.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Injections / Blood Draws / IV Drip</b>                      Should not be allowed in affected limb.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Injections / Blood draws / IV Drip:</b> Never allow injections or blood draws in affected limb(s).</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Blood Pressure Cuff</b>                      Should not be used on affected arm. See Measuring BP on your leg – Coping Pg 29-on</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Blood Pressure Test:</b> Never allow blood pressure cuff on affected limb(s). Do not allow automatic BP tests. Limit inflation of manual cuff to 20 mmHg above baseline BP.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Razor Cuts</b>                      Use only electric razor including under arms, etc.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Razor Cuts:</b> Use only safe type electric razor, maintained in top condition (to prevent safety razor cuts).</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>General Triggers For LE</b>                      Sunburn, bruise, cut, scratch, bite, infection, burn, etc.; all must be prevented.                      (Also see <b>Skin Care / Cellulitis</b> below)                      (Also see <b>Lymphedemapeople</b> article on <b>Prevention of Cellulitis</b> in Section 4.)                      See <b>Section 9 Resources</b> for related subjects.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Triggers:</b> Use all possible precautions to prevent any abrasion, burn, sunburn, bruise, insect bite (mosquito, bee, flea, etc.), animal bite, cat or thorn scratch, puncture, infection, etc. Blood loss also aggravates edema.                      Wear gloves for gardening, dish washing. Do not cut cuticles during manicure. See physician immediately if signs of infection exist, pain or any rash or hot skin feeling- this suggests cellulitis, etc. Such infections can go systemic rapidly, resulting in death.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Heavy Lifting</b>                      Avoid heavy or repetitive lifting, work, or weight training (&gt;12 lbs.) with affected limb.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Heavy Lifting:</b> Do not do any heavy lifting. Observe a maximum weight limit of 12 pounds. Do not carry heavy purses on <i>either</i> shoulder.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Exercise &amp; Physical Labor</b>                      Exercise must be moderated in affected limb. Monitor the affected limb during and after activity for any change in tissue, size, shape, texture, soreness, heaviness or firmness. Rest when fatigue occurs. Also see LE Wellness Manual Section 7 Exercise.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Exercise Plan:</b> Extreme weight training or rigorous work to the point of fatigue or pain is not allowed (Max 12 lb. lift). Practice light aerobics, bicycle, swimming or walking, hydrotherapy. Eliminate all extreme stress in affected limb(s) such as heavy repetitive use (scrubbing, pushing, and pulling).</p>

**Ongoing Checklist –****Action****A) Skin Care to Prevent Injury or Infection**

- Use neutral pH soaps to avoid excessive drying (ask pharmacist).
- Use moisturizing cream.
- Inspect skin folds and keep them clean and dry.
- Inspect for cuts, scrapes, abrasions, and insect bites.
- Wear protective gloves and garments when working outdoors, washing dishes.
- Use sunscreen and insect repellents.
- In hot climates, vegetable-based products are preferable to mineral oil- or petroleum-based products.
- Avoid extremes of temperature, both hot and cold.
- Avoid using scented products.
- If injury occurs, wash with soap and water, apply topical antibiotics, and monitor for redness, pain, or swelling. If swelling, redness, fever, pain, occurs, contact a physician immediately.
- Avoid blood pressure, blood draws, IV, injections, or venipuncture on affected limbs.
- Avoid manicure, pedicure, cuticle trimming or push-back, ingrown nails.
- No chemical peels, no intense facials, scrubs, or chemical baths.
- Inspect the affected limb daily for any changes.
- Avoid scratches, cuts, abrasions, or other skin injuries.
- Avoid burns from cooking.
- Avoid prolonged exposure to heat, such as hot tubs or saunas.
- Use electric razor under arms.
- Wear comfortable, supportive shoes.
- Wear loose fitting jewelry and clothes.
- Wear light-weight breast prostheses.
- Avoid using the affected arm to lift or carry heavy objects.
- Elevate the affected limb daily or as needed.

**B) MLD**

- Use MLD as often as possible, as prescribed, appropriate to your lymphedema condition.

**C) Compression**

- Use compression garments & night garments as directed by physician or therapist.
- Use compression garments during air travel, or periods of inactivity as advised by physician or therapist.
- Wear well-fitting compression for stronger action.
- Use compression bandaging (CB) (lymphedema bandaging) as prescribed or directed by therapist.
- Wear compression stockings generally if advised.

**D) Exercise / Movement & Elevation**

- Do exercise routine daily including diaphragmatic breathing exercise/aquatic exercise.
- Use SLD or hydrotherapy daily, with verification of proper technique.
- Wear well-fitted compression garment or bandaging for strenuous activities.
- Use lymphedema taping as appropriate, with verification of proper technique if self-applied.
- Monitor limbs after exercise; gradually build up duration and intensity of exercise, avoid heavy resistance; and discuss embarking on exercise programs with therapist first.

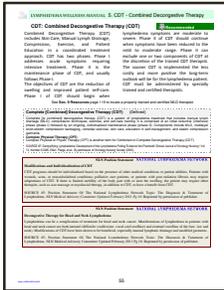
**E) General Advisory**

- Maintain a healthy weight, and eat a balanced fresh food diet.
- Avoid wearing tight garments, underwear, or jewelry on affected areas of the body.
- Should swelling progress, seek early treatment from a trained therapist to prevent or minimize progression.
- Review the risks with your therapist and physician regularly.
- **Never ignore your lymphedema.**

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 5: COMBINED DECONGESTIVE THERAPY

Patients can employ these select pages from the [LYMPHEDEMA WELLNESS MANUAL](#).  
A LE therapist can implement this material with you to manage your condition.



**Patient:** Review this topic for an overview of the *gold standard* for lymphedema care, Combined Decongestive Therapy (CDT). This is the consensus Best Practices treatment for LE.



### Combined Decongestive Therapy (CDT)



Combined decongestive therapy (CDT) includes Skin care, Manual lymph drainage, Compression, Exercise, and Patient education in a coordinated treatment approach. CDT has two phases. Phase I addresses acute symptoms requiring intensive treatment. Phase II is the maintenance phase of CDT, and usually follows the intensive phase I, as the therapist selects the needed protocols.

The objectives of CDT are the reduction of swelling and improved patient self-care. Phase I of CDT should begin when lymphedema symptoms first appear, or are moderate to severe. Phase II of CDT should continue when symptoms have been reduced to the mild to moderate range. Phase II can exclude one or two components of CDT at the discretion of the trained CDT therapist. The sooner CDT is implemented the less costly and more positive the long-term outlook will be for the Lymphedema patient. CDT must be administered by specially trained and certified lymphedema therapists.

### CDT: Skin Care



As a component of CDT

Lymphedema patients are subject to serious skin infections due to the protein-rich fluid in the dermis. Any skin opening, wound, burn, puncture, etc. may cause immediate infection. CDT includes skin care as an essential component that must be both taught to the patient, and complied with by the patient, in order to prevent initiating a lymphedema, a flare-up of existing lymphedema, or an infection of the skin (cellulitis). The general elements of skin care are:

- Keep skin and skin folds soft, clean, and dry.
- Use mild neutral pH cleansers.
- Monitor skin surface for any opening, no matter how small.
- Practice assiduous first aid for any skin opening, no matter how small.
- Prefer vegetable-based emollients, especially in a hot climate.
- Avoid scented products.

Contact your physician if there is redness, heat, rash, or pain, immediately.

### CDT: Manual Lymph Drainage (MLD)



As a component of CDT

Manual lymph drainage (MLD) is a specialized hands-on physical technique that promotes the movement of lymph through the available lymph pathways. MLD has been shown to be effective for lymphedema in all stages. MLD can be very effective in areas of the body that are difficult to treat with compression bandages (CB) (breast, thorax, genital, head & neck). MLD reduces swelling, thus providing symptom relief (tight skin, heaviness in the limb). MLD can also be effective when performed on its own.



## SECTION 6: OTHER TREATMENTS

Patients can employ these select pages from the **LYMPHEDEMA WELLNESS MANUAL**.  
A LE therapist can implement this material with you to manage your condition.



**Patient:** Read ratings of other proposed LE treatments. Be cautious if considering alternative treatments, as few are effective. Research all risks carefully before proceeding.



### Other Treatments: Alternative Practices

Not Rated

Achieving optimum health requires balance in everything. Both action and inaction, intention and reflection, are undertaken to gain not just a healthy physical condition, but also a mental state that reflects moderation and contentment and promotes improved quality of life (QOL).

Optimum health for you can be achieved through many different practices including:

- Yoga
- Meditation
- Herbs and diet
- Energy balancing techniques, etc.

A healthy respect for relaxation, time for yourself, personal nurturing, adequate sleep and nutrition, and creative pursuits and recreation is essential to achieve this balance.

There is abundant research on the general effects of complementary medicine practices, most of it very positive. Research on specific improvements to LE limb volume and similar questions is inconclusive so far. However, improving general health and wellbeing is an important objective, and should be undertaken if possible.

### Pneumatic Compression Pump (IPC)

 Effectiveness Unknown

Some patients have found benefit by the use of IPC (Intermittent Pneumatic Compression). However, successful application of IPC must be done by specially trained therapists in conjunction with CDT. Promotion of IPC in the absence of skilled CDT has not been consistently found to be effective. There are several contraindications and potential harms for IPC in the literature. Newer devices and features may overcome some of the earlier injury concerns. Additional studies are needed to validate these changes.

### Hyperbaric Oxygen (HBOT)

 Effectiveness Unknown

There is very little evidence that hyperbaric oxygen will result in the improvement of lymphatic flow, reduced limb volume, or have other beneficial effects. Two studies indicated potentially promising possibilities. There is a small chance that hyperbaric oxygen treatment may result in small reductions in volume. A possible benefit of hyperbaric oxygen would be in the case of an arterial ulcer. Consult your physician or wound clinic.

## SECTION 7: EXERCISES

Patients can employ these select pages from the [LYMPHEDEMA WELLNESS MANUAL](#).  
A LE therapist can implement this material with you to manage your condition.



**Patient:** Be cautious when adding new activities, and do not overextend or exhaust yourself. Taper down when reducing activity level.



**Patient:** Always consult your therapist before undertaking a new exercise program, and start any new activity slowly, adding a little more time or effort over several days. Taper up or down when changing your exercise routines. Do not stop an exercise program all at once.

If you normally wear a compression garment, it should normally be worn during exercise. Compression bandaging during exercise is often indicated.

Always consult your physician before altering exercise or activity patterns.

### The Lebed Method, Healthy-Steps

Sherry Lebed Davis is one of the foremost authorities on the use of movement for the healing and prevention of complications from breast cancer surgery and other related treatments. She is the co-founder, with Drs. Marc and Joel Lebed, of Healthy-Steps, moving you to better health with the Lebed Method.

The Lebed Method was developed for their mother who had survived her breast cancer but fell into depression and limited arm mobility that impacted her quality of life. In 1996, the teacher became the student and the journey came full circle when Sherry herself became a breast cancer survivor and again in 1999 when she developed Lymphedema.

Healthy-Steps offers wellness programs for everyone, from young adults to seniors, regardless of health, age or ability level. The Healthy-Steps program improves overall wellbeing, range-of-motion, balance, strength and endurance, as well as emotional resilience and self-image.<sup>15</sup>

**For more information on Healthy-Steps:**

<http://www.gohealthysteps.com> -or- [www.lebedmethod.com](http://www.lebedmethod.com)

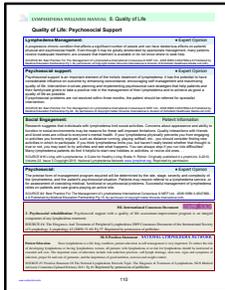
email: [info@lebedmethod.com](mailto:info@lebedmethod.com)

Ofc: 877.365.6014

**Patient:** Healthy-Steps is frequently recommended by certified lymphedema therapists (CLT).

## SECTION 8: QUALITY OF LIFE

Patients can employ these select pages from the **LYMPHEDEMA WELLNESS MANUAL**.  
A LE therapist can implement this material with you to manage your condition.



**Patient:** If you have persistent low moods or feel overwhelmed, call your counselor, therapist, support group members, or a mental health hotline today.



### A Lymphedema Patient Support Website

(Examples of topics covered. See the SU-SO website for the actual text.)

“Having a diagnosis of lymphedema is not fun. And certainly not a bed of roses! But it is not the end of the world! And you can still take time to smell the roses! Here are some tips from some of us "Swell Girls and Guys" who have worked our lymphedema and its treatment and management into our daily lives, and still have a great quality of life! ...”

#### **What to do While Waiting for First Appointment with a Qualified Lymphedema Therapist**

DO NOT try and treat this yourself!!! Proper professional treatment is essential to ...

#### **Handling the Lymphedema Diagnosis and Surviving the Intensive Portion of Treatment**

I developed lymphedema a month ago and have been so down. I have to say that ...

#### **Getting Through the Day with a Wrapped Arm**

I've been anxious to share this with you all but had to wait to get ...

#### **Making Time for daily MLD and Exercise**

I'm not coping very well lately - not doing the things I should and feeling crappy ...

#### **Dealing with Night Garments and Sleeves/Gloves**

By the way - if you are using a night sleeve it never hurts to have a set of ...

**Patient:** StepUp-SpeakOut Inc. (SU-SO, a non-profit), has a fine collection of info on its website. A particularly useful page is imagined above (sample topic headings and partial sentences).

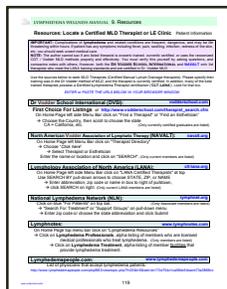
If you are interested, browse those pages, and see if you don't come away feeling better about the LE pioneers that have come before you and dealt with concerns and hardships, and shared so elegantly. Go to: [http://www.stepup-speakout.org/How\\_You\\_Can\\_Cope\\_with\\_Lymphedema.htm](http://www.stepup-speakout.org/How_You_Can_Cope_with_Lymphedema.htm)

Many lymphedema websites list support groups and clinics under RESOURCES, LINKS or similar headings. Most books on lymphedema also have lists of local, regional, or national groups.

A comprehensive website for LE is the National Lymphedema Network at: [www.LymphNet.org](http://www.LymphNet.org)

## SECTION 9: RESOURCES

Patients can employ these select pages from the [LYMPHEDEMA WELLNESS MANUAL](#).  
A LE therapist can implement this material with you to manage your condition.



**Patient:** Find information resources in this very condensed section. The [LYMPHEDEMA WELLNESS MANUAL](#) contains more extensive resources, in all sections.



### Locate a Certified Lymphedema Therapist or Physician Now

Look4LE Smartphone App - American Lymphedema Framework Project (**ALFP**): [alfp.org](http://alfp.org)

Download this free smartphone App. Has 900+ CLT-LANA qualified listings and much supporting information.  
→ Go to [alfp.org](http://alfp.org), → Click on **Look4LE**. Or visit your App store. Search for **Look4LE**. Download.

Dr Vodder School International (**DVSI**): [vodderschool.com](http://vodderschool.com)

On Home Page left side Menu Bar click on "Find a Therapist"  
→ Choose the Country, then scroll to choose the state (CA = California, etc.)

National Lymphedema Network (**NLN**): [lymphnet.org](http://lymphnet.org)

Click on "Find Treatment" on topmost row of menu bar,  
→ Enter zip code or choose the state abbreviation and click Submit

Publishes a quarterly magazine **LymphLink** with resources guide and more. Educational materials available.

Lymphedema People: [www.lymphedemapeople.com/](http://www.lymphedemapeople.com/)

Dedicated to people who experience all types of lymphedema. **Includes a list of physicians** working with LE.

Lymph Notes: [www.lymphnotes.com](http://www.lymphnotes.com)

On Home Page top menu bar click on "Lymphedema Resources"  
→ Click on Lymphedema Professionals, alpha listing of medical professionals who treat lymphedema.  
→ Click on Lymphedema Treatment, alpha listing of member facilities that provide lymphedema treatment.

The online information resource and support group for those with lymphedema and family, friends, therapists.  
Lymphedema Resources Pages: [www.lymphnotes.com/resources.php](http://www.lymphnotes.com/resources.php)

Lighthouse Lymphedema Network: <http://lighthouselymphedema.org/>

Whether you are newly-diagnosed with lymphedema and want more information about what it is and how it can be treated, or perhaps you are interested in learning what the latest research in this field promises.

StepUp-SpeakOut: [www.stepup-speakout.org/](http://www.stepup-speakout.org/)

StepUp-SpeakOut Inc. (SU-SO) has a fine large website. Located on the East Coast, has lymphologists on the staff.

Many other LE regional groups and websites provide support. Add any favorites here:

# LYMPHEDEMA Wellness Manual

*This very useful and comprehensive manual provides a wealth of practical information for patients and therapists on all aspects of lymphedema assessment and management, and includes an impressive array of charts, illustrations, forms, checklists and resources rarely available in a single publication.*

*Kathleen Francis M.D., Medical Director Lymphedema Physician Services, P.C., Medical Director of the St Barnabas Lymphedema Treatment Center, Medical Director of Klose Training and Consulting, author.*

*The Wellness Manual is an excellent resource and provides state of the art information about the lymphatic system and lymphedema. Gay Lee has created a concise reference and practical guide for lymphedema patients and CDT therapists. If you have lymphedema, or if you treat lymphedema, this manual is for you!*

*Saskia R.J. Thiadens, RN, Founder and Executive Director of the National Lymphedema Network (NLN), founder of the first lymphedema clinic in the U.S., and author of numerous articles on Lymphedema.*

*A user friendly resource for patients and therapists alike. I commend Gay Lee for linking the components of practice with the levels of scientific evidence to support them! This manual will open many eyes for those who pay careful attention to the expansive contents. Read it and prepare to change the way you think about lymphedema and its treatment.*

*Sheila H. Ridner, PhD, RN, FAAN, MSHA, Martha Rivers Ingram Professor- Vanderbilt University School of Nursing.*

*The Lymphedema Wellness Manual will be on your desk at all times! Not only does it summarize – but it also organizes important studies and recommendations. All this information in a condensed manual will increase your confidence when fielding questions in the clinic. The sections on controversial or confusing topics such as medications, pump use and infection are very helpful in sifting through the data and hearsay to make sound recommendations. The countless patient handouts, teaching tools and forms are well-designed and illustrated. This manual serves as an excellent bridge from the textbook to the clinic and home.*

*Sarah Stolker, MSPT, CLT-LANA, senior instructor- Norton School of Lymphatic Therapy, author of No Rules: Lymphedema and the Young Women at Risk, and many other publications and articles.*

*The Lymphedema Wellness Manual is a tour de force! An invaluable resource for therapists working their way through the maze of information – and mis-information – available about lymphedema. Gay Lee has taken the guesswork out of assessment and management decisions. This manual is a must-have for therapists, and should be required reading in all lymphedema courses.*

*Jan Douglass RMT BHSc (Hons) Dr Vodder CLT Dr Vodder School International Instructor, author*

## LYMPHEDEMA Wellness Manual

A “Whole Health Catalog” for the lymphedema community. Every topic a lymphedema patient or therapist may want to access is included - a complete quick reference, with links and resources that are thorough and documented for immediate follow-up. Easy to read, the essential user reference in your hands: don't be without it.

