

HOSPITAL STREET DOCTORS

Lymphoedema Care



What is Lymphoedema?

Lymphoedema occurs when the lymphatic system does not function properly and cause swelling of a part of the body. It usually occurs in the arms and legs but can occur in other areas as well. Lymphoedema can sometimes become severe and cause serious problems and often is a long term or chronic condition. This is why early and careful management is needed to help reduce symptoms and prevent complications.

What Causes Lymphoedema?

Primary lymphoedema - quite rare and is caused from an error in lymphatic development.

Secondary lymphoedema - caused by injury to a normally developed lymphatic system. Any condition or procedure that damages your lymph nodes or lymph vessels can cause lymphedema eg. Surgery, radiation, infection or trauma.

Mixed lymphoedema – combined with venous disease, immobility or lipoedema.

What are the Signs and Symptoms of Lymphoedema?

Some early signs of lymphoedema (can be intermittent)

- Heaviness, tightness or swelling.
- Discomfort or pain, burning or itching.

If you experience these symptoms, or you believe that you may be at risk of developing lymphoedema, talk to your doctor about having an assessment by a Lymphoedema Practitioner.

What can the Lymphoedema Clinic Offer You?

- Assessment by a Lymphoedema Therapist and an individual treatment plan.
- Manual Lymphatic Drainage.
- Education prior to surgery.
- Early intervention strategies.
- Lymphoedema risk minimization strategies care, self-massage and exercise.
- Prescription of compression therapy including bandaging, garments and compression pump if appropriate.
- Skin care advice.

Can Lymphoedema be Treated?

It is not possible to cure lymphoedema, however it can be managed by compression therapy, skin care and massage. The treatments can reduce pain, support mobility and decrease the risk of complications like cellulitis and skin changes.

Is there a Cost?

Private fees currently apply for all appointments. An initial one hour appointment is \$60 with no Medicare rebate available. Ongoing costs will be advised by the lymphoedema practitioner.

The cost of bandages and garments is at the client's expense. Some financial assistance may be available for garments for Victorian clients through the SWEP Lymphoedema Compression Garment Program, or NSW clients through the Enable Program. We can provide you with more information.

If you have private health insurance cover or DVA insurance, please check with your provider as it may be covered in your policy depending on the level of cover.

Do I need a Referral?

A referral from a doctor or other health professional is required providing relevant medical and medication information. A referral form can be found at our clinic website www.hospitalstreetdoctors.com.au or by emailing lymph.care@hospitalstreetdoctors.com.au

How to Contact Us?

Lymphoedema Care at Hospital Street Doctors

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