

## Fast Facts

### Lymphedema

- Lymphatic system is part of your immune system and is a network of vessels designed to carry protein-rich fluid throughout the body
- Lymph nodes are filters that have cells that fight infection and cancer
- Typically, lymph fluid is pushed through the vessels by the muscle contractions as you move and from small pumps in the wall of the lymph vessels
- Lymphedema occurs when the lymph fluid isn't able to drain, resulting in it leaking into the surrounding tissue
- Anything that can block the drainage of lymph fluid—most common cause is cancer
- Symptoms can range from mild to severe

<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Prevention</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Swelling to part or all of an arm or leg (including fingers or toes)</li> <li>-Feeling of heaviness or tightness in the affected limb</li> <li>-Restricted range of motion</li> <li>-Recurring infections</li> <li>-Hardening and thickening of the skin (fibrosis)</li> </ul>	<p>Goal: Reduce the swelling and prevent complications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Keep antibiotics on hand in case symptoms of cellulitis appear</li> </ul> <p><i>Reduce Swelling:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Exercises that allow for gentle contraction of the muscles</li> <li>-Manual lymph drainage</li> <li>-Compression bandages</li> <li>-Compression garments</li> <li>-Sequential pneumatic compression devices</li> </ul> <p><i>Surgical Options:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Lymph node transplant</li> <li>-Creation of new drainage paths</li> <li>-Removal of fibrous tissue (severe cases)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Minimize risk for complications:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Avoid injury to the affected limb</li> <li>-Clean your skin daily and inspect for signs of trouble</li> <li>-Apply lotion to prevent dry skin</li> </ul> <p>-Take care of your whole body by eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, getting some form of exercise daily, reducing stress, and getting enough good quality sleep</p>

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