

# INFORMATION SHEET

## Lymphoedema Self-Management Plan (Head and Neck)



Lymphoedema Practitioner

Today's date

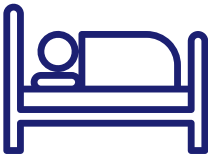


Patient's name

Patient's date of birth

NHS no.

Key steps to managing your lymphoedema	Self-care plan	Individual advice given
<p><b>Looking after your skin</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash and dry your face and neck thoroughly, especially under skin folds</li> <li>• Apply non-perfumed moisturiser to your face and neck daily</li> <li>• Protect your skin by avoiding sunburn, cuts, bites and scratches:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wear a hat and apply suncream when you are exposed to the sun; use a Sun Protection Factor of at least 30 (SPF30)</li> <li>- Use mosquito / bug spray where necessary</li> <li>- Apply antiseptic to any areas of broken skin</li> <li>- If you shave, use a clean electric shaver</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Avoid trauma to the affected area (i.e. injections, blood samples, hair removal)</li> <li>• Monitor skin for signs of cellulitis (infection of the skin): common symptoms are pain, swelling, heat, redness, blistered or broken skin and fevers</li> <li>• If you have signs of infection, contact your GP or call 111 out of hours</li> <li>• If skin becomes sore, blistered or is weeping/leaking, inform your GP practice or community nurse</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Maintain a healthy lifestyle</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim to lead an active and healthy lifestyle</li> <li>• Keep well hydrated and eat a balanced diet: maintaining a healthy weight will reduce the strain on your lymphatics</li> <li>• Aim to complete 30 minutes of moderate activity 5 times a week: walking, cycling, swimming or gardening are good ideas to consider</li> <li>• If you are new to exercise you may wish to seek the advice and support of a healthcare professional (GP, lymphoedema practitioner, physiotherapist)</li> <li>• Complete the lymphoedema specific exercise programme daily that was given by your lymphoedema practitioner</li> <li>• Build up activity and exercise levels gradually</li> </ul>	

If you have any questions, contact:  
Dorothy House Lymphoedema Service  
Telephone 0345 0130 555

Key steps to managing your lymphoedema	Self-care plan	Individual advice given
<p><b>Positioning</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You may find that when you lie flat (i.e.: overnight in bed) the swelling builds up; lymph fluid (swelling) usually drains from the face and neck towards your body, so when you are lying flat this process slows down</li> <li>• Where possible, consider your positioning in bed and use pillows and cushions to support your head and neck to allow the lymph fluid to drain</li> <li>• Completing gentle range of motion exercises when getting up can help to promote the flow of this fluid</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Self-Lymphatic Drainage</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your lymphoedema practitioner may suggest that you follow a Self-Lymphatic Drainage (SLD) care plan</li> <li>• SLD is a form of self massage that helps to move the lymph fluid (swelling) towards its natural pathway(s) to promote drainage with the aim of reducing the swelling</li> <li>• Further information will be given on an individualised SLD care plan</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Wearing compression garments</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your lymphoedema practitioner may suggest that you wear a compression garment to help with the swelling</li> <li>• When you first get the garment, gradually build up the time you wear it by 1-2 hours each day, or as advised</li> <li>• Take care when applying the garment – you may need to use a mirror or the help of a relative to ensure it is in the correct place</li> <li>• Once on, the fabric of the garment should be smooth to your skin without wrinkles or creases</li> <li>• If when wearing the garment, you experience pain, discomfort or sensation changes to the head and neck area, remove the garment immediately and inform your lymphoedema practitioner</li> <li>• Do not wear restrictive clothing around your neck (i.e.: collars, scarves or ties)</li> <li>• Follow washing instructions as per garment information leaflet</li> <li>• Garments should be replaced every six months or if damaged. Set a reminder in your phone, diary or calendar each year and inform your GP or Prescriptions Team when you need a new set of garments.</li> <li>• If garments no longer fit or your swelling has changed, call your Lymphoedema Service or ask your GP to re-refer if you have been discharged</li> </ul>	

For further information, here are some other useful contacts:

**Lymphoedema Support Network** Website: [Lymphoedema.org](http://Lymphoedema.org) | Email: [admin@lsn.org.uk](mailto:admin@lsn.org.uk) | Telephone: 020 7351 4480

**Lipoedema UK** Website: [lipoedema.co.uk](http://lipoedema.co.uk) | Email: [info@lipoedema.co.uk](mailto:info@lipoedema.co.uk)

**British Lymphology Society** Website: [thebls.com](http://thebls.com)

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