

# INFORMATION SHEET

## Lymphoedema Self-Management Plan (Breast Oedema)



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 breast thoroughly, especially under skin folds</li> <li>• Apply non-perfumed moisturiser to your chest and breasts daily, especially if you underwent radiotherapy</li> <li>• Protect your skin by avoiding cuts, bites and scratches; apply antiseptic to any areas of broken skin</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> <li>• Wear a supportive bra when exercising</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>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>Positioning and Bra Support</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you have breast lymphoedema (swelling) wearing the correct bra is really important</li> <li>• Bra and underwear garments should be well-fitting and supportive, but not tight or restrictive</li> <li>• If you have a larger cup size it is important that you always wear a bra to lift and support your breast(s), as this will promote lymph drainage</li> <li>• Your lymphoedema practitioner may suggest you wear a soft cup or sports style bra overnight to prevent further build-up of fluid</li> <li>• Following treatment, your breast size and/or shape may have changed. If possible, organise to be re-measured at your local department or underwear store. You may require a different size or style bra, or prosthesis to ensure your bra suitably fits both breasts.</li> <li>• Your lymphoedema practitioner may suggest that you use Kinesiotape and/or foam padding as an additional form of support to aid lymph drainage</li> <li>• Further information will be given on an individualised care plan if appropriate</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Finding the correct bra</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose a bra with full cups that cover each breast, wide side panels, wide adjustable straps and wide band across the body for full support</li> <li>• Make sure the band of your bra fits firmly but comfortably around the narrowest part of your back as this band provides the main support</li> <li>• You should be able to fit two fingers under the band once fastened</li> <li>• Check the band of your bra is the same height all the way round – it should not ride up at the back</li> <li>• Both breasts should fit neatly into the cups of the bra and be enclosed; nothing should be spilling out above or below (too small)</li> <li>• There should be no wrinkling of the fabric (too big)</li> <li>• The middle part of the bra, between the breasts, should lie flat against your body</li> <li>• The straps should not dig into the shoulders (too small) or slip off the shoulders (too big)</li> <li>• Follow washing instructions as per garment information leaflet</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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