

# INFORMATION SHEET

## Lymphoedema Self-Management Plan (Genital Oedema – Female)



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 genital area thoroughly</li> <li>• Protect your skin by avoiding cuts, bites and scratches</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 or is blistered, or if you notice any leaking or unusual discharge, inform your GP practice or community nurse</li> <li>• There is a risk of the skin around the genital area becoming fragile and sore. When toileting, washing or drying the area, use a patting or dabbing technique instead of wiping to protect the skin. If the skin has broken down, we may suggest you use an unperfumed barrier cream for skin protection</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 – this may likely include pelvic floor exercises</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>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 support garment</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It may be beneficial to put a rolled up towel between your legs, under the genital area, when sitting, in order to provide some support</li> <li>• Wearing a sanitary towel or incontinence pad inside underwear can help to provide some support to the area: your lymphoedema practitioner may provide you with specific padding to use for this purpose</li> <li>• If possible wear supportive underwear or cycling shorts.</li> <li>• Your lymphoedema practitioner may provide you with a compression garment to wear in the form of tights/shorts</li> <li>• Your lymphoedema practitioner may suggest that you use Kinesiotape as an additional form of support to aid lymph drainage; further information will be given on an individualised care plan if appropriate</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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