

INFORMATION SHEET

Lymphoedema Self-Management Plan (Upper Body)



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>Looking after your skin</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash and dry your arm(s) thoroughly, especially under skin folds and between fingers • Apply non-perfumed moisturiser to your arm(s) daily; make sure the last stroke is in a downwards direction towards the toes, to prevent folliculitis (infection of hair follicles) • Protect your skin by avoiding sunburn, cuts, bites and scratches • Wear sun cream or long sleeves when your arm is exposed or when doing high risk activities, such as gardening • Apply antiseptic to any areas of broken skin • Monitor skin for signs of cellulitis (infection of the skin): common symptoms are pain, swelling, heat, redness, blistered or broken skin and fevers • If you have signs of infection, contact your GP or call 111 out of hours • Keep nails clean and well-trimmed • Be careful when shaving armpit hair; consider using an electric shaver • If skin becomes sore, blistered or is weeping/leaking, inform your GP practice or community nurse 	
<p>Maintain a healthy lifestyle</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to lead an active and healthy lifestyle • Keep well hydrated and eat a balanced diet: maintaining a healthy weight will reduce the strain on your lymphatics • Aim to complete 30 minutes of moderate activity 5 times a week: walking, cycling, swimming or gardening are good ideas to consider • If you are new to exercise you may wish to seek the advice and support of a healthcare professional (GP, lymphoedema practitioner, physio) • Complete the lymphoedema specific exercise programme daily that was given by your lymphoedema practitioner • Wear compression garments (if applicable) when exercising or active to support and protect your arm. • Build up activity and exercise levels gradually 	

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>Positioning your arm(s)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete regular, gentle movement of your arm to improve circulation and lymph flow, and reduce joint stiffness, as guided by your lymphoedema practitioner • Placing a pillow under your arm and armpit when resting can help to support the swollen limb and improve the flow of circulation/lymph 	
<p>Wearing compression garments</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your lymphoedema practitioner may suggest that you wear a compression garment to help with swelling • When you first get the garment, gradually build up the time you wear it by 1-2 hours each day, or as advised • When applying your garment, you should be in a safe and supported position: you may also need help from a relative/carer or want to use an aid to help you to get the garment on and off • Once on, the fabric of the garment should be smooth to your skin without any wrinkles or creases • Do not fold the garment over • The top of an armsleeve should sit 2cm below the armpit • Bra and underwear garments should be well fitting and supportive but not tight • If, when wearing your garment, your fingers, thumb and/or hand become very cold, blue, you feel pins and needles, numbness or you experience any pain, remove the garment immediately • Follow washing instructions as per garment information leaflet • 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 • 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 	

For further information, here are some other useful contacts:

Lymphoedema Support Network Website: Lymphoedema.org | Email: admin@lsn.org.uk | Telephone: 020 7351 4480

Lipoedema UK Website: lipoedema.co.uk | Email: info@lipoedema.co.uk

British Lymphology Society Website: thebls.com

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