



Prevention of Lymphedema

A. Diet

There is no specific diet known to help prevent or cure lymphedema. In general, however, a well balanced diet consisting of high fiber, variety of fruits and vegetables, very low salt and low fat (i.e. less than 20% is recommended). It is important to maintain ideal weight. Patients must avoid obesity.

B. Skin Care

Meticulous skin care is needed for the lymphedema patient. Creams and lotions such as Eucerin and Curel are recommended. Lotion should be at a relatively low pH balance.

C. Precautions

1. Do not have injections, vaccinations, flu shots, blood draws, and IV placement on the affected upper extremity.
2. Avoid having your blood pressure taken in the affected limb.
3. Keep the skin clean, dry and well moisturized.
4. Utilize antibacterial and hypoallergenic soap to wash extremities.
5. Inspect the involved limb for blisters, cuts, scratches and fungal infections.
6. Keep the cuticles pushed back but do not cut them.
7. Keep the cuticles moist with cream or lotion.
8. Wear rubber gloves while doing housework that includes cleaning with harsh detergents, steel, wool etc.
9. Wear protective gloves with other work that may result even in minor injuries such as when cleaning out the garage.
10. Wear proper fitted shoes. Avoid tight fitting shoes (high heels) and/or constricting laces and boots.
11. Avoid walking outside barefooted.
12. Wear swim shoes around the pool and locker room.
13. Do not shave the affected extremity or arm pit. It is recommended to use an electric or battery operated shaver with

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a narrow head rather than a straight razor. Under no circumstance should one use depilatory creams.

14. Use a thimble when sewing by hand avoid needle and pin pricks.

15. Be careful of skin injuries when making arts and crafts i.e. burns from glue guns.

16. Do not wear clothes that are constrictive.

17. Avoid getting sunburned especially anywhere in the radiated field of the lymphedematous limb. Wear sunscreen.

18. Avoid saunas and hot tubs. An increase in temperature can cause an increase in the lymphedema.

19. Be knowledgeable of how the lymphedematous limb responds to various levels of exercise intensity and frequency.

20. Any exercise that causes the limb to increase in size which does not return to pre exercise size within 24 hours should be avoided.

21. Use insect repellent when outdoors (i.e. to avoid infections from insect bites.)

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