Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Lymphoedema Self-Management Plan

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Lymphoedema Self-Management Plan

Patient Information

Long Term Conditions Service

- Author ID: JS
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Introduction

Enabling you to have better control of your lymphoedema by

- **Keeping active & moving more.**
- **Eating a healthy, balanced diet & managing your weight.**
- **Looking after your skin & reducing the risk of infection.**
- **Wearing your compression garments as advised once they have been prescribed and fitted**

What is Stable Lymphoedema

It is a long term swelling in the tissues (present for more than 3 months), that develops when the lymphatic system is not working properly.

How do I keep my symptoms stable and under control?

- Look after your skin:

1. Wash, dry, & moisturise daily.
2. Check for changes in colour and for any injuries.

3. Try to prevent damage to your skin – sunburn, scratches, cuts, insect bites or stings.

4. Avoid having injections and blood or blood pressure taken from the swollen area.

5. Avoid very hot / cold baths or showers, and extreme changes in temperature.

- Carry out daily simple lymphatic drainage if you have been taught this.
- Move more regularly / take daily exercice - avoid standing or sitting for long periods.
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet.
- Aim to maintain a healthy weight.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Try to sleep in a bed, not a chair.
- Wear your compression garment as advised once it has been issued.
- Avoid wearing tight clothing or jewellery.
- Get replacement garments every 6 months, via your GP.

My daily routine ideas:

Use your phone or diary to remind you of your new, daily routine – this will help you keep your lymphoedema under good control.

What do I need to do if:

I notice worsening of my swelling, or new symptoms like numbness, tingling, cramps, or pain. My compression garment doesn't fit as well.

- Remove your garment.
- Contact your Lymphoedema Service or GP if your symptoms persist.

I develop any damage to my skin?

- Seek advice from your local Pharmacy, GP or Practice Nurse.
- Keep area clean and dry.
- Regularly monitor for signs of infection / cellulitis.

I notice fluid leaking through my skin?

- Seek advice from your GP or Practice Nurse.

I develop any redness to my skin?

- See next section on cellulitis

Cellulitis

Cellulitis is a sudden, non-contagious infection of the skin.

What does it look / feel like?

New onset of one or more of the following:

- Redness and / or rash
- Swelling
- Heat / increased temperature
- Tenderness / pain
- Fever / shivers / muscular aches and pains
- Nausea / vomiting

- Feeling generally unwell

What should I do?

- **CONTACT YOUR GP IMMEDIATELY – you will need antibiotics**
- **AVOID wearing your compression garments during an acute attack – replace them as soon as the area is comfortable enough to tolerate them.**
- **STOP any exercise programmes and lymphatic drainage until it is completely resolved.**
- **Make sure your limb is elevated when you are not moving about.**
- **Drink plenty of fluids.**

Useful resources / contacts

GP: (insert details here *)	*
Pharmacy: (insert details here *)	*
Wigan Lymphoedema Service	E-mail: wwl-tr.wiganlymph@nhs.net Telephone: 01942 482230

Lymphoedema Support Network Useful information, including access to self-management videos.	E-mail: admin@lsn.org.uk Telephone: 020 7351 4480 www.medic.video/?ilf-lymph
Lipoedema UK	www.lipoedema.co.uk/
Active Health - Healthy Routes – Wigan Council For exercise and lifestyle advice and support.	www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Health-Social-Care/Adults/fit-and-well/losing-weight.aspx Telephone 01942 488481
Specialised Weight Management Service: for support for those with a BMI of 40 and above (or above 35 if you have associated long term health conditions).	www.wigan.gov.uk/BeWell/Active-health/Weight-management/Specialist-Weight-Management-Service.aspx- where you will find the online referral form. Telephone 01942 496496
Think Wellbeing: support for those with low mood, anxiety, or depression.	https://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/think-wellbeing/ Telephone 01942 764449



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