

Recommendations to Patients with Lymphedema

1. Always try to use positive reinforcement rather than negative, ie., – what I cannot do
2. Change limb position often rather than let it rest in one position too long
3. Try to sleep so that your body weight is not pressing on the affected limb. If at all possible, sleep with affected area elevated.
4. Exercise with compression beginning with shorter periods of time gradually increasing to tolerance. “Cause and effect” – how what you do affects your lymphedema condition
5. Carry bags & heavy loads on the unaffected side.
6. Use the unaffected side for B/P measurements, injections and any invasive therapy
7. Avoid any injury to affected side, eg. shaving etc.
8. Have MLD performed immediately on recent hematoma/bruising
9. Avoid sunburns and keep affected area/areas out of sun
10. Avoid any tight constricting clothing: watch bands, bra straps, elasticized socks, etc
11. Wear watch on unaffected side.
12. Allow nothing to pinch the affected side
13. Keep affected area clean, soft and supple by using cleansing lotions and creams
14. Use tepid water rather than hot water when washing or bathing affected area.
15. Report to your lymphedema specialist any chafing, redness, indentation, loose or tightness of compression garment.
16. Wash compression garments each evening after wear. Wash bandages every 3-4 days when used daily during intensive combined decongestive therapy
17. Wear a light prosthesis (breast form) on the affected side
18. Keep your body weight down or try to loose weight if you are overweight
19. Keep salt intake down – “as salt goes, so goes water”
20. Refrain from eating refined sugars or anything containing refined sugars.
21. Reduce fat and fatty foods in your diet
22. Make sure your protein intake is equitable to your size, weight, body build & metabolism

Phyllis Tubbs-Gingerich, RN,BSN,LE,CLT – Lymphedema Specialist
Board Certified Mastectomy & Orthotic Fitter 04/01/2011
CA. Licensed DME Fitter and Supplier
Certified Burn & Gradient Compression Garment Fitter & Supplier