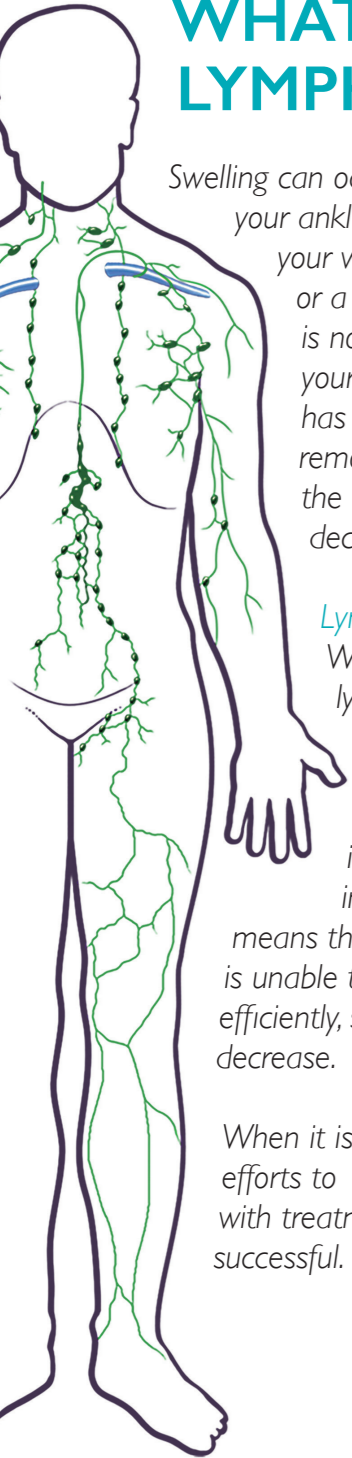


WHAT IS LYMPHEDEMA?

Swelling can occur when you sprain your ankle, get a bug bite, break your wrist or get a bump or a bruise. This swelling is normal. In these cases, your lymphatic system has to work extra hard to remove extra waste, but the swelling will eventually decrease and go away.

Lymphedema is different. When you have lymphedema, your lymph system is not able to work as hard as it used to because it has been damaged in some way. This means that your lymph system is unable to remove extra waste efficiently, so swelling will not decrease.

When it is diagnosed early, efforts to resolve lymphedema with treatment are much more successful.



TYPES AND CAUSES OF LYMPHEDEMA

Primary/Congenital – the person was simply “born” with the condition or can develop it in later life with no obvious cause.

Secondary – caused by surgery (mastectomy, breast-sparing surgery, lymph node removal, prostatectomy, hysterectomy or amputations), radiation, trauma, infection, cancer and severe venous insufficiency.

WHO IS MORE LIKELY TO GET LYMPHEDEMA?

Anyone who has had damage or trauma occur to a part of their lymphatic system can develop lymphedema. Lymphedema may not develop right away. Sometimes it can take months or years to develop.

Lymphedema is seen frequently in cancer patients who have had lymph nodes removed or have had trauma to their lymph nodes because of radiation treatment. Patients who have undergone surgeries that require the removal of lymph nodes should always be on the alert for the symptoms of lymphedema.

Patients who have been diagnosed with these conditions can benefit from a treatment program:

- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Hodgkin's Disease
- Reduced circulation
- Parasite infections
- Sports-related injuries
- Migraine headaches
- Venous insufficiency
- Swelling of the face & neck
- Fibromyalgia
- Total joint replacement surgery

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Signs and symptoms include:

- Swelling
- Pain
- Weakness
- Skin tightness
- Loss of flexibility
- Tighter clothing
- A feeling of heaviness or achiness
- Hardening/thickening of the skin

If you experience these symptoms, call your doctor right away.

LYMPHEDEMA TREATMENT OPTIONS

Lymphedema therapy is intensive and is often done 5 days/week, although each case is different. There is also an expectation that the patient and/or caregivers will be able to learn the skin care, exercise, and self-wrapping techniques to carry through at home.

If you think you can benefit from lymphedema therapy you should:

- Contact your physician
- Confirm the diagnosis of lymphedema
- Have your physician refer you to our rehabilitation program for lymphedema management

BENEFITS OF LYMPHEDEMA THERAPY

Patients who have received therapy for lymphedema have reported some of the following benefits as a result of treatment:

- Reduction of swelling, pain and discomfort
- Improved skin color/texture
- Reduced risk of infection/cellulitis
- Improved motion and ability to perform daily activities
- Increased relaxation/stress relief

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR LYMPHEDEMA?

Since there is no cure for lymphedema, the goal of treatment is to reduce your swelling and maintain the reduction. This can be achieved with safe, non-invasive and reliable measures that can provide long-term results. Treatment includes:

Manual Lymph Drainage (MLD): A gentle, non-invasive manual technique that stimulates the superficial lymphatic system and enhances lymph drainage to healthier lymphatic areas in the body.

Multi-Layered Compression Bandaging: Used to facilitate and maintain the effects of MLD. Bandaging can also assist with softening of the skin.

Therapeutic Exercises: In conjunction with bandages/garments, therapeutic exercise facilitates the body's muscle pump action to move lymph fluid.

Meticulous Skin Care: To prevent infection, cellulitis and dermatological changes.

Education: So the patient can manage his or her lifelong condition, which includes information on precautions and restrictions for selfcare.

LYMPHEDEMA ISN'T THE END OF A NORMAL LIFE. WE CAN HELP YOU TAKE CONTROL.

Penn Highlands Healthcare offers a **LYMPHEDEMA MANAGEMENT SERVICE** through its Occupational Therapy Departments. Occupational therapists will work with lymphedema patients to give them the care and education that they need to manage this condition, which involves chronic swelling in a body part.

This service focuses on educating a patient who has developed chronic swelling, known as lymphedema, so that they are able to manage their condition. Treatment for lymphedema at Penn Highlands is non-surgical.

Although most of the services are offered on an outpatient basis, the program does offer inpatient and home health services as well.

Occupational Therapy Department Locations:

BROCKWAY
814-265-8792

BROOKVILLE
814-849-6878

CLEARFIELD
814-768-2285

CURWENSVILLE
814-236-8359

DUBOIS
814-375-3372

EMPORIUM
814-486-7878

HUNTINGDON
814-643-0037

JOHNSONBURG
814-965-5279

KANE
814-837-8955

PHILIPSBURG
814-342-8287

NEW BETHLEHEM
814-275-1190

RIDGWAY
814-788-5534

ST. MARYS
814-788-8490

TYRONE
814-684-2133

FOR MORE INFORMATION

My Lymphedema

www.mylymphedema.com

National Lymphedema Network

www.lymphnet.org
800-541-3259

Lymphedema Awareness Foundation

www.eLymphNotes.org
407-324-3255



www.phhealthcare.org

July 2021

LYMPHEDEMA MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Penn Highlands Healthcare

