



Lindsey Lodge Hospice Lymphoedema Clinic

Always there to care

Lindsey Lodge Hospice and Healthcare
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What is Lymphoedema ?

Lymphoedema is a chronic condition which causes swelling to any part of the body but is most common in the arms and legs. This condition develops when the lymphatic system, which drains fluid from the tissues of the body, does not function normally due to either a congenital abnormality or under development (Primary Lymphoedema), or deficiency or damage to the lymphatic system (Secondary Lymphoedema) which can be due to cancer, surgery, radiotherapy, trauma, disease, infection, obesity etc. Lymphoedema cannot be cured but it can be treated and well managed, particularly if diagnosed early.

What to expect from our service

Our Lymphoedema Team consists of a Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist, Nurse Therapist, Advanced Assistants and administrative support.

Your first contact with our service will be a call from one of our team to book an assessment visit. During this appointment we will ask questions about your health and your lymphoedema and how it may be affecting you at this time. We will also examine and measure the affected area and check your weight. You will be given the opportunity to ask questions and to gain a greater understanding about lymphoedema and how we can work together to achieve a good result. By attending for treatment and following your therapist's advice, our aim is to start to control your lymphoedema rather than your lymphoedema controlling you.

What is the treatment for Lymphoedema?

Lymphatic Drainage

This is a special, gentle massage technique aimed at moving fluid out of the affected area in order to reduce swelling.

Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD) is a specialised therapy carried out by specially trained practitioners which is designed to improve the function of the lymphatic system. This is achieved through gentle movements to the skin which help draw lymph fluid into the lymph vessels below the skin. MLD results in a greater amount of waste products and excess fluid being removed from the body's tissues into the lymphatic system.



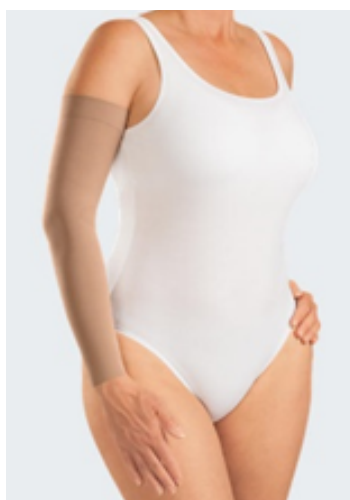


This effect can also be achieved by use of **Intermittent Pneumatic Compression (IPC)** where a pump known as LymphFlow Advance, is used to simulate MLD for leg or arm swelling. Your therapist will assess which is the most appropriate for you.

Simple Lymphatic Drainage (SLD) is a simple form of MLD which you/your carer can be taught and then use regularly at home to help manage your lymphoedema.



Compression Garments/Wraps



For many people the use of compression therapy for the affected limb or area can contribute greatly to the long term management of lymphoedema, as it supports the swollen area, helps to reduce the overall size of the swelling, improves the shape of the limb, and helps prevent a further build-up of fluid. Wearing compression during activity/exercise will make it more effective.

One of our team will carefully measure you for the appropriate garment. This should be comfortable, however, if you experience any pins and needles/numbness or pain, or your fingers/toes change colour, it is too tight. Remove it straight away and contact your lymphoedema therapist for advice. It is important that you are properly measured and fitted to prevent these problems from occurring.





Any compression garments need to be replaced every 6 months as they lose their elastic properties and therefore become less effective. If there is a change in the size of your affected limb, you will need to be re-measured before any new garments are prescribed.

Compression plays a vital role in the management of your lymphoedema and your compliance is vital.

Lymphoedema Taping



A special taping technique using Kinesiology tape can be applied to gently lift the top layer of the skin allowing lymph fluid to drain more easily therefore helping to manage pain and swelling. It is often used in areas where it is difficult to apply compression therapy such as the breasts, chest, trunk, etc.



Skin Care

Skin health and skin care is really important, especially for the area affected by lymphoedema. We will advise you on how best to look after your skin and help prevent infection, how to recognise an infection and what to do in the event of an infection



Exercise



Exercise can promote natural drainage of lymph fluid as muscle contraction helps pump fluid through the body and increasing your heart rate improves your circulation. Advice will be given about what is beneficial and what is not advisable to do regarding exercise/movement. Always wear your compression garments when exercising.

Lifestyle Changes

Being overweight is not only detrimental to your general health but will also make your swelling worse due to pressure on the lymphatic system which also makes treatment less effective. Where indicated, you may be advised about diet, weight loss and also going to bed at night if this is not your usual pattern.

Emotional Support

Living with any long-term condition can be challenging, even more so with conditions which change the way that you look. Your therapist will aim to support you through your treatment however, additional support services such as counselling and complementary therapy are available at the hospice and can be accessed via your lymphoedema therapist if appropriate.



How long is a treatment likely to last?

Your assessment visit will take between one and a half to two hours. Any further appointments will take no more than one hour. The use of this time will vary according to the therapist's assessment and your treatment needs.

Treatment can continue over several weeks/months however the frequency of visits will be reduced once your lymphoedema is stable. If you are self-managing, you may be discharged back to the care of your GP, but you will be able to contact the service directly for any help or support after this time if required.

Cancellations

Due to the large number of patients requiring treatment and the limited availability of clinic appointments we are required to have a strict cancellation policy. If you cancel more than three times in one year we may discharge you from the service and notification of this will be sent to your GP. Any further treatment will require a new referral from an appropriate healthcare practitioner. In the event of extenuating circumstances this may be reviewed. Please give as much notice as possible when cancelling appointments so that your appointment slot can be offered to someone else.

Sources of further information

THE LYMPHOEDEMA CLINIC, LINDSEY LODGE HOSPICE

LYMPHOEDEMA SUPPORT NETWORK (LSN)

St. Luke's Crypt, Sydney Street, London SW3 6NH

Tel. 020 7351 4480

E-mail admin@lsn.org.uk

Website www.lymphoedema.org

BRITISH LYMPHOLOGY SOCIETY (BLS)

PO Box 7153, 59 Birmingham Road, Lichfield, WS14 4JW

Tel. 01452 790178

E-mail via <https://www.thebls.com/contact-us>

Website www.thebls.com

MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

Tel: 0808 808 0000 (7 days a week 8am-8pm)

Email Support Line via <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/forms/contact-us/ask-macmillan-form.html#309773>

Website www.macmillan.org.uk

BREAST CANCER NOW

Tel: 0808 800 6000 (Mon-Fri 9-4pm, Sat 9-1pm) – Email or speak to a specialist breast care nurse

E-mail hello@breastcancernow.org

Website www.breastcancernow.org

LIPOEDEMA UK

Email via <https://www.lipoedema.co.uk/contact-us/>

Website <https://www.lipoedema.co.uk/>

LIPOEDEMA LADIES

Email info@lipladies.co.uk

Website <https://www.lipoedemaladies.com/>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/LipoedemaladiesUK>



Space for Patient/Carer notes/questions to ask at assessment visit

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