



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Lymphedema Prevention after Breast Cancer Surgery and Treatment:



Lymphedema a form of high protein edema is the chronic swelling of a body part caused by malformation or malfunction of the lymphatic system. People whom have had breast cancer surgery encompass 36 percent of the Lymphedema population. There is no know known cure for this disease, but it can be effectively managed with Combined Decongestive Therapy. The best defense against Lymphedema is education. Below is a list of precautions that all patients whom have had either a lumpectomy or a mastectomy (involving lymph node dissection or not) should follow.

- 1) Do not ignore swelling consult your Dr.
- 2) Never allow blood pressure, or blood work to be done on your surgical side.
- 3) Wear a medical alert bracelet.
- 4) Avoid heavy lifting or repetitive activity with the affected side.
- 5) Avoid tight fitting rings and jewelry on the surgical side.
- 6) Avoid Sunburns by using SPF 48 and repeating regularly.
- 7) Avoid any trauma to the arm (scratches, bruises, bites)
- 8) Attempt to achieve full shoulder range of motion as early after surgery as possible (as the Doctor allows)

These are just are just a few of the top 18 published by the National Lymphedema Network on WWW.NLN.ORG

As with most diseases the best treatment is prevention. If you do develop Lymphedema or even if you have a post surgical swelling you will benefit from the treatment known as Combined Decongestive Therapy. CDT consists of:

Skin Care: Proper cleaning and re-hydration of the skin maintains integrity and enhances elasticity.

Manual Lymph Drainage: uses your body's natural fluid drainage ability to assist in the removal of accumulated fluid

Compression Therapy: Using special bandages (not ace bandages) to achieve edema reduction through the use of compression

Exercise: Uses a special exercise sequence to stimulate the lymph pathways and assist in draining excess fluid

Nutritional Instruction: There are specific dietary guidelines that will assist in achieving fluid reduction.

Compression Garments: These differ from compression bandages they are used for maintenance rather than reduction.

At Carolina SportsCare and Physical Therapy we have developed a pre-and post surgical screening, education and exercise regimen to reduce the risk of Lymphedema after surgery. As with most diseases prevention is the key, and education will be our greatest ally.

Please contact your Dr. at the first sign of swelling. If you would like to be screened for Lymphedema or would like more information on how to get in touch with a Lymphedema Therapist closest to you please call Kevin Green (843)521-1970.

Kevin Green is a Combined Decongestive Therapist trained by the Vodder School, and is part of the Team of Therapists, Athletic Trainers, Massage Therapists and Personal Trainers at Carolina SportsCare and Physical Therapy dedicated to bringing the highest quality of care to Beaufort, Bluffton and the entire low country.