

# Lymphedema Management

Lymphedema is swelling in various parts of the body caused by a build-up of lymphatic fluid in the tissues. It can be caused by damage to lymph nodes or vessels as a result of surgery or radiation treatments for cancer patients. It can also be caused by other surgeries, trauma or infections, or be the result of rare inherited conditions.

A certified lymphedema therapist can best manage this condition and uses the following principals:

**Education:** how to help prevent lymphedema progression, including proper skin care and hygiene.

**Skin moving therapy:** manual lymphedema therapy (MLT) is used to move fluid through lymph vessels, enhancing flow through the lymphatic system. Soft tissue mobilization is a type of massage that can be used to release scar tissue and other tightness that may contribute to the swelling.

**Compression bandaging/garments:** special lymphedema garments or bandaging can encourage fluid movement and reduce swelling. It is important to be fit properly to avoid worsening the swelling in one section of the body. A therapist can help determine how and when a patient should be wearing the garments.

**Exercise:** patients are instructed on the type and intensity of exercise to help mobilize the fluid. Stretching exercises can help loosen the tissues in the involved region.



**Complex physical therapy:** this is an approach that uses a skin moving technique, skin care, exercise, and compression garments. It is considered an effective treatment for lymphedema.

*A doctor's written prescription is required to schedule an appointment. It may be sent by fax or mail. Prior authorization by your health insurance provider may also be required.*

To schedule an appointment or to obtain more information, please contact the StoneCrest Physical Medicine Department at (615) 768-2650.

***Physicians may fax patient referrals to: 651-768-2655.***

 **StoneCrest Medical Center**

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