



Lymphoedema

What is Lymphoedema?

A condition that results in build-up of lymph fluid in the body part e.g. arm or breast.

What causes lymphoedema?

Primary lymphoedema is inherited.

Secondary lymphoedema which is most common and is caused by trauma in lymphatic system e.g.:

- Infection of the lymph nodes
- Removal or damage of lymph nodes
- Radiation of lymphatics
- Mastectomy
- Abnormal growth near or in the lymph nodes

Sign and symptoms of lymphoedema?

- Swelling of part of the body – feeling or visual (rings not fitting; indentation from clothing, jewellery, watches; bony landmarks less obvious in compare to other side)
- Heaviness of the limb
- Tightness of the limb
- Fibrosis – hardening and thickening of the skin
- Pins and needles
- Dull ache
- Lymphoedema Index Score

Risk factors for developing Lymphoedema

- Increased body weight
- Rapid increase in physical activity or exercises
- Immobility
- Heat and humidity including hot spa, jacuzzi, sauna or hot yoga
- Skin infection

Complications of Lymphoedema

- Cellulitis: A bacterial skin infection
- Lymphangitis: Infection of lymph vessels
- Lymphangiosarcoma: A rare form of soft tissue cancer

Treatment and management strategies in Lymphoedema

- Manual lymphatic drainage
- Compression bandaging or fitted garments
- Physiotherapy and exercises
- Skin care regime