

First Lymph Care guides

by Sue Hansard

* available free to clients *

- 1. Foot and Leg Care**
- 2. Hand and Arm Care**
- 3. Lymphoedema Self-Help**
- 4. General Advice for Lymphoedema**
- 5. Post-Treatment Advice**
- 6. Travel and Holidays**
- 7. Lymphoedema Daily Skin Care ABC**
- 8. I.H.M. 24-hour after-care**

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First Lymph Care guide 1

Foot and Leg Care

Scrupulous skin care - moisturise feet daily (e.g. aquamol, dermol, double base);

flexitol heel. balm daily for dry/cracked heels)

Take Care when trimming nails.

Use antiseptic cream and a dressing on cracked /broken skin.

Visit a chiropodist regularly for toe nails if unable to do it yourself.

Make sure your chiropodist is registered and fully trained, especially if you have diabetes or lymphoedema.

Dry well between toes to avoid fungal infections. Use a hair dryer if unable to reach your toes.

Always use footwear, supportive and not too tight. indoors and out.

Wear loose-cuff socks/tights, compression hosiery as advised.

Treat infections such as athlete's foot immediately (use anti fungal cream and then antifungal powder to prevent it recurring especially if you use health spas and public pools.)

Wear clean socks/stockings every day.

Avoid` Ballet pumps' and `flip flops'; these do not support the foot or offer any protection.

Avoid standing for long periods of time.

Seek GP's advice for any persistent problems.



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First Lymph Care guide 2

Hand and Arm Care

Scrupulous skin care...dry hands well and moisturise regularly.

Use non-scented soaps and lotions.

Care when trimming nails.

Use rubber gloves when washing -up, protective gloves when gardening.

Avoid excessive heat /cold.

Avoid tight rings/bracelets / watch straps.

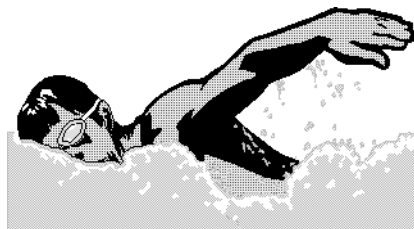
Wash any cut immediately, apply antiseptic cream and cover with clean dressing.

Use a thimble when sewing.

Avoid lifting or carrying heavy objects... shopping bags / vacuum cleaners / saucepans.

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First Lymph Care guide 3

Lymphoedema Self-Help

Never allow injections / blood sampling / blood pressure readings / acupuncture on your affected limb.

Prevent cuts / bites / stings / animal scratches, by using protective clothing and insect repellents.

Treat any cut / bite / sting immediately by cleaning well and applying antiseptic cream and a clean dressing to the area.

Use electric shavers / depilatory creams for hair removal.

Observe any injury for signs of redness / heat / pain / swelling... this may indicate infection which may require antibiotics. Or if you experience `flu-like' symptoms - headache, fever, weakness - seek medical advice - an infection may be developing... antibiotics will help to prevent it worsening.

Keep a supply of **Penicillin V** (erythromycin if allergic to Penicillin) and always take a supply when on holiday, so that you can start treatment at the first signs of infection.



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First Lymph Care guide 4

General Advice for Lymphoedema

Seek medical advice if your affected limb leaks fluid, it is at greater risk of infection and may need special treatment to stop leakage.

Avoid temperature extremes and sunburn...keep affected limb covered and use high factor sun block.

Maintain your ideal weight, if possible and eat healthily.

Reduce salt, caffeine and alcohol intake... excess amounts can be a factor in water retention

Wear compression hosiery as advised. Always wear hosiery when travelling, especially on long journeys. Change your position frequently and move around if possible.

Avoid tight / restrictive clothing, tight cuffs / waistbands / bra straps and underwires - these can all restrict lymph flow.

Increase water intake to approx 2 litres / day. This helps to flush your system of impurities.

Exercise regularly, but don't overdo it - swimming, walking, cycling are all good choices. Wear your compression hosiery during exercise.

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First Lymph Care guide 5

Post-Treatment Advice

Although **LDM** is a very gentle form of massage, its influences can be felt throughout the body. The following advice should be helpful to you:

Drink plenty of water... this helps to flush out toxins and maintains hydration.

You will probably feel extremely relaxed, try to maintain this calm feeling throughout the day, if possible be more restful.

You may pass more urine - this is because **LDM** has increased fluid flow throughout the body, which in turn flushes through the kidneys removing toxins as it goes.

Following facial massage you may develop a runny nose. This is because the sinuses continue to drain after treatment.

Avoid / reduce caffeine, alcohol, salt intake following treatment. This will prevent fluid retention.

Report any other problems to your therapist.

First Lymph Care guide 5

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First Lymph Care guide 6

Travel and Holidays

Wear loose fitting clothes

Drink plenty of water

Avoid alcohol

Change your position frequently travel.

Exercise feet and legs, even while sitting.

Stand up and walk a little if possible.

Break a long car/ coach journey with frequent stops.

Wear 'flight socks' of the correct size for any long journey.

IF YOU HAVE LYMPHOEDEMA:

Always wear your compression garment as advised.

Carry spare hosiery.

Take medicated plasters, antiseptic cream and a supply of antibiotics.

Use insect repellent.

Prevent sunburn: cover up or use high factor sunscreen.

Cleanse and moisturise skin daily. **Always** dry well.

Avoid going barefoot.



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First Lymph Care guide 7 Lymphoedema Daily Skin Care ABC

A. Wash affected limb, including hand/foot, with soap-free cleanser such as SANEX. Use warm water not hot.

Dry skin well, by patting rather than rubbing.

Dry in between skin folds, fingers and toes and especially anywhere that the skin has become thickened, scaly or lumpy, it can easily be damaged.

Check for signs of fungal infections & cracks, these can lead to infection.

B. Apply non-scented moisturiser (e.g. AQUEOUS CREAM) to skin, inc. hands and feet. (Always patch test new creams first in case of allergy.)

Apply gently and in the direction of hair growth, to avoid cream blocking hair follicles.

Apply cream sparingly between skin folds and overhanging swellings. Accumulations of cream can lead to infection; so wash skin every day.

C. Treat insect bites or cuts promptly, wash and apply antiseptic.

Seek medical advice if the area becomes hot, painful or more swollen.

There may be an infection that requires antibiotic treatment immediately.

Cover any wound or cut to prevent germs entering.

Avoid walking barefoot if leg is swollen, you may pick up infection.

Use a thimble when sewing if a hand or arm is swollen.

Swollen limbs must **never** be used for injections, blood sampling or measuring blood pressure.

Remember: people with lymphoedema are at greater risk of skin infections, cellulitis and ulceration, so proper daily skin care is vital to keep the skin healthy.

IF YOU NOTICE CHANGES IN THE SKIN, GET MEDICAL ADVICE.

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First Lymph Care guide 8

I.H.M. 24-hour after-care

- ✓ DRINK plenty of water and herb teas... to stay hydrated and flush out toxins
- ✓ REST and RELAX
- ✓ AVOID spicy food, alcohol and smoking
- ✓ CARE when driving..... your reflexes may be slower.
- ✓ LEAVE oil on hair for several hours after massage if possible, to allow absorption of nutrients into the scalp and hair root.
- ✓ APPLY shampoo to dry hair, then add water, if your treatment has included oils to the scalp.



Following an INDIAN HEAD MASSAGE you may experience:

- Deep relaxation
- Tiredness
- Light-headedness
- Headache
- Facial tenderness
- Runny nose
- Aching muscles



These are all normal reactions of the body as it expels toxins from areas of stiffness & congestion. The aftercare advice should help to alleviate these feelings, however if you are concerned please contact Sue for advice. If any symptom persists see your GP.

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