



### Our Mission

We are committed to improving the lives of people living with lymphedema.

# Our History

In 1996 a group of lymphedema patients and family members, responded to the absence of support services for those suffering from Lymphedema by founding the Lymphovenous Association of Ontario.

Later the name Lymphedema Association of Ontario ("LAO") was adopted thereby allowing the LAO to more actively promote lymphedema education, prevention. treatment and quality of life for those with the condition.

Over the last 27 years the scope of the LAO has expanded with a view to realizing the ideals and mission of our Founders which remain our first and foremost priority ~ supporting the needs of individuals living with Lymphedema.

The work of the LAO would not be possible without the work our dedicated volunteers, valued members, generous donors and Board of Directors.

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The Lymphedema Association of Ontario (LAO) resource directory & website contains health information with the aim of informing and educating visitors. The knowledge, competence, and recommendations of health care practitioners are not substituted by this material and should not be used as a diagnostic tool or take the place of treatment recommendations. If you have question's or concerns about your personal health please speak with a licenced health care professional. Every effort is made to ensure the information in the resource directory and on the LAO website is accurate and current, however, the LAO in no way guarantees the accuracy or completeness of same.

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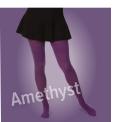


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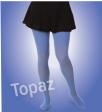


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# 6 Things patients Should Know About Lymphedema

#### 1) What causes lymphedema?

Lymphedema is a chronic inflammatory condition and is characterized by chronic swelling that can occur in any area of the body

- Head/Neck
- Genitals
- Chest wall/breast
- Limbs

# 3) What are the potential complications of lymphedema?

Some complications of lymphedema include:

- Reduced mobility
- Cellulitis
- · Chronic pain
- Psycho-social impacts
- Limited ADLs

# 5) What are the signs and symptoms of lymphedema?

Some of the signs and symptoms of lymphedema include:

- Heaviness
- Aching
- Swelling

#### 2) What is lymphedema?

Any condition that overwhelms the lymphatic system

#### PRIMARY

#### **SECONDARY**

- Hereditary
- Obesity
- - Many cancers and their treatments (lymph node dissection, radiation)
  - Surgical intervention
  - Trauma
  - Immobility
  - Infection

# 4) Can lymphedema be treated by medication?

No medications exist to treat the lymphatic system

 Antibiotics and antifungals are used to treat cellulitis infections

# 6) What is the gold standard for treating lymphedema?

There is no cure for lymphedema but treatment exists called Complete Decongestive therapy, including:

- Manual lymphatic drainage
- Skin care
- · Exercise and healthy eating
- Compression therapy

#### Prevalence of Lymphedema for Canadians

Chronic Venous Insufficiency: Undetermined		Canada 1 million for 36 million population*	Ontario 388,920 for 4 million population**
Morbid obesity related			
	57%	570,000	221,684
Cancer related 31%		310,000	120,565
Disabilities/Chair Bound			
8%		83,000	31,114
Surgeries (non-cancer) 4%		40,000	15,557
Primary lymphedema			
2%		20,000	7,778

\*Mean incidence of cancer related lymphedema from systemic reviews

- All cancers: 15%
- Breast cancer: 18%
- Melanoma: 18% lower extremity 3% upper extremity
  Head and neck: 4%
- Gynecological: 20% uterine, cervical, vulva
- Genitourinary: 10% prostrate, bladder, penile
- Sarcoma: 30%

Reference: Shaitelman et al 2015

\*USA up to 10 million LE (Stanford) extrapolated to Canada = 1 million. Canadian Lymphedema Framework 2018 \*\*National Census 2016. All numbers shown are approximate This information does not replace the knowledge, expertise, skill and judgement of health care providers. It is not meant to be used for diagnosis or treatment.



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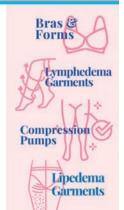


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# Lymphedema Information

Lymphedema is chronic swelling of a body part caused by an accumulation of lymph fluid. If you have had cancer treatment, surgery, trauma or a genetic deficiency that has affected your lymph nodes, you are at a lifetime risk.

#### The Lymphatic System

Lymph is a colourless fluid which forms in the body and normally drains back into the blood circulation through a network of lymph vessels and lymph nodes. The lymphatic system plays an important part in the body's defense against infection.

#### **How Lymphedema Occurs**

If the drainage routes through the lymphatic system become blocked or damaged, lymph accumulates in the tissues and swelling occurs. Unlike other edemas, lymphedema leads to changes in the tissues, such as fibrosis and an increased risk of infection. The swelling can then become even more difficult to control. Types of Lymphedema Primary lymphedema develops as a result of a malfunctioning lymphatic system, usually as a result of genetic underdevelopment. Secondary lymphedema is the result of damage to lymphatic pathways. This may be a result of treatment for cancer following surgery or radiation therapy. Lymphedema can also occur as a result of infection, severe injury, burns, or any other trauma or surgery that causes damage to the lymphatic nodes and vessels. Lymphedema affects all ages and may occur months/ years after surgery, so it is important to understand and manage the life-long risk.

### Lymphedema Symptoms

The signs and symptoms for lymphedema may include:

- A full or heavy feeling in the affected limb
- A feeling of tightness in the skin
- Less movement or flexibility in the hand, wrist, shoulder or ankle
- Clothing or jewelry feels tight in one specific area
- Abnormal swelling in the affected area

Unfortunately, some people are told that nothing can be done to help. Many doctors are either not knowledgeable or are unaware of where to refer their patients for advice. Although there is no cure, there is help to manage this life-long condition.

Lymphedema Management: The goal of lymphedema treatment is to help reduce and control swelling, prevent it from getting worse and decrease the chance of complications. Ongoing self-care is crucial. The standard treatment is called Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT).

The individual elements, used in combination, are: Manual Lymph Drainage (MLD): a specialized massage to redirect lymph fluid. Compression Therapy: elastic bandaging, compression sleeves, gauntlets or tights. Exercise: to promote lymphatic flow by activating muscle and joint pumps. Excellent Skin Care: the use of antibacterial cleansers and pH neutral lotions. The treatments must be performed by an experienced and certified therapist who has completed

at least 135 hours of post graduate training specific to lymphedema. We can help you find a certified therapist near you. Early diagnosis and treatment are vital to control lymphedema.

#### **Precautions & Recommendations Infections**

With damaged or blocked lymph drainage, you are at risk of infection (particularly cellulitis) in the affected area. Good skin care reduces the risk of infection.

If you feel generally unwell or have any sign of infection (fever, nausea, vomiting or a hot, red, tender, swollen limb) do not delay in seeking medical attention immediately. In most circumstances you will require antibiotics.

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Scratches

XI Burns Razors

Insect bites Fungal infection

Sunburn

#### USF

■ Gardening gloves

Oven gloves

#### Trauma

Any trauma or injury to the affected limb will increase your risk of infection and further swelling. AVOID whenever possible: injections, acupuncture, blood sampling and blood pressure readings from the affected limb AND tight or constricting clothing or jewelry PLUS extremes of heat or cold.



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#### **General Recommendations**

- It is important to keep your weight within normal limits as much as possible.
- Try to use the swollen limb normally, as muscular activity encourages lymph drainage, but avoid sudden overexertion, as that may increase swelling.
- If your arm is swollen, avoid lifting or carrying heavy objects. If your leg is swollen, avoid standing or sitting with your legs down for long periods.
- Wear a compression garment when flying to help reduce any increase in swelling.





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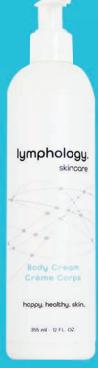
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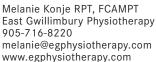
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#### **WATERLOO**

Ann Oaks RMT MLD, CDT 519-574-4428 annoaksrmt@gmail.com www.annoaksrmt.ca Bernadette Tallon RMT 519-884-4848 btallonrmt@yahoo.ca www.dearbornhealth.com

Ianmari Baas Ross RMT 519-884-4848 jan.rossrmt@gmail.com

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Marnie Gallant RMT MLD, CDT 416-732-5218 mgallantrmt@gmail.com www.brooklinmassage.com



#### WINDSOR

Maddalena Simone RMT, CLT Active Body 519-250-1855 www.activebodytherapy.com



Sarah Batal RMT, CDT RMT Sarah B 519-564-7655 rmtsarahb@gmail.com

#### WOODSTOCK

Lindsay Van Asseldonk RMT, CLT The Calm Therapeutic Centre 519-602-5562 | hello@thecalmtc.ca www.thecalmtc.ca

All therapists listed have provided proof of their CDT certification from a LANA approved school where they received a minimum of 135 hours of post graduate training in lymphedema. Disclaimer: Therapists pay to be members of the LAO which includes a listing of their services. The LAO is not responsible for the services performed or rates charged.



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# **General Information**

**Financial Assistance:** Professional members: The LAO offers a bursary program that you may nominate your patients for financial assistance

#### **Our Provincial Partners**

- Alberta Lymphedema Association: albertalymphedema.com
- Lymphedema Association of New Brunswick: lymphedemanb.ca
- BC Lymphedema Association: bclymph.org
- Lymphedema Association of Manitoba: lymphmanitoba.ca
- Lymphedema Association of Newfoundland and Labrador: lymphnl.com
- Lymphedema Association of Nova Scotia: lymphedemanovascotia.com
- Lymphedema Association of Quebec: https://en.infolympho.ca
- Lymphedema Association of Saskatchewan: sasklymph.ca

Hospital Based Services: https://www.lymphontario.ca/Hospital-Based-Clinics

Support Groups: Lymphontario.ca/Support-Groups

We are pleased to announce that we have launched our own monthly virtual lymphedema support group, created for and by people with lymphedema. We come together to share information, resources, hopes, fears, successes, and hardships in a safe space to co-create support and growth.

Therapist Certification: Certified lymphedema therapists are health professionals (nurses or doctors) or allied health professionals (physiotherapists, occupational therapists or registered massage therapists) who have gained additional post-graduate certification to specialize in lymphedema care.

Certified Lymphedema Therapy Training includes:

- Pathophysiology of lymphatic function and disorders.
- Manual techniques and compression bandaging/garment principles.
- Theory and practice of Complete Decongestive Therapy.
- Minimum 135 hours of post-graduate training (1/3 theory to 2/3 practical).
- Professional Standards of Lymphedema Training
- The Lymphology Association of North America (LANA) promotes standards for the management of lymphedema and/or related disorders. LANA advocates for the establishment and maintenance of certification for medical professionals who provide such services.

#### **Training Programs - North America**

- Academy of Lymphatic Studies
- Dr. Vodder School International
- International Lymphedema & Wound Institute (ILWTI)
- Klose Training & Consulting
- Norton School of Lymphatic Therapy

#### Assistive Devices Program (ADP) - ADP Information

ontario.ca/page/assistive-devices-program

Email: adp@ontario.ca 416-327-8804

Phone: Toll free at 1-800-268-6021 or TTY at 1-800-387-5559.

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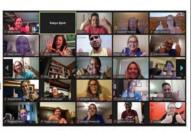
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The Assistive Devices Program (ADP) of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care provides funding assistance for Pressure Modification Devices (PMD)—compression garments and sleeves—for chronic lymphedema management as well as sequential extremity pumps for primary lymphedema management. Any resident of Ontario with a valid Ontario health card is eligible to apply. The ADP pays 75% of the approved cost. An Application for Funding Pressure Modification Devices form can be obtained from an ADP registered authorizer or vendor or downloaded and printed from the ADP website.

For forms go to: Lymphontario.ca/Finance-and-Insurance

**ADP Registered Authorizers, Fitters, Vendors** Many of the LE MLD/CDT-Certified Therapists listed on our website are ADP Registered Authorizers. For more information about ADP Registered Authorizers near you email the ADP directly at adp@ontario.ca. www.ontario.ca/ page/garments-pumps-and-braces.



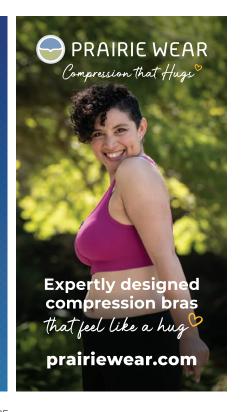
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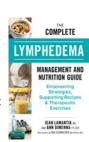
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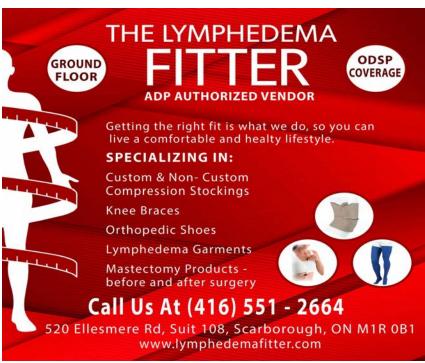
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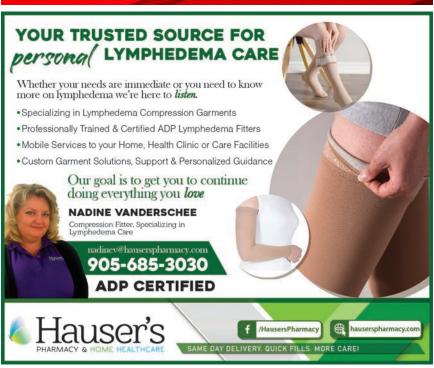


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# The Lymphedema Association of Ontario (LAO) Offers:

#### SUPPORT

Offering information on lymphedema treatment, products, resources, CDT certified therapists, registrants of the Assistive Device Program (ADP) and support groups in Ontario through our toll-free information line, email, newsletters and website.\*

#### **OUTREACH**

Through our website, newsletter, educational events geared to patients, those at risk and health care professionals.

#### **ADVOCACY**

For improved access to treatment and increased health care and insurance coverage.

#### **COLLABORATION**

By strengthening partnerships with all stakeholders, promoting research and contributing to a stronger lymphedema community.

\*We do not provide medical advice or treatment.

#### **COMPASSION FUND**

The mission of the Compassion Fund is to provide financial assistance for lymphedema patients who cannot afford the necessary treatments, with the goal of giving these patients the opportunity to work with a professional practitioner to assess their condition and learn how to manage and care for their lymphedema themselves.

#### **GARMENT FUND**

The mission of this fund is to help provide lymphedema patients with compression garments. Patients may apply through an LAO member Therapist or Retailer/Fitter and with a Doctor's prescription. For more details visit, www.lymphontario.ca/The-Garment-Fund



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### Ways to Donate to the LAO

Donations help to keep the Lymphedema Association of Ontario (LAO) going and help us grow. With these generous donations we can improve access to quality lymphedema information, resources, and services in Ontario. There are many ways for you to support the LAO. Please visit either: www.lymphontario.ca/Donate or

https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/lymphedema-association-of-ontario/



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