

## **LYMPHEDEMA**

### **Q. What is lymphedema?**

A. Lymphedema is swelling caused by abnormal accumulation of lymph fluid. Surgical removal of lymph nodes, trauma, or a congenital defect can interfere with lymphatic systems, causing fluid to pool in your arms and legs.

### **Q. What are early signs of lymphedema?**

- Swelling of part or all your arm or leg, including fingers or toes.
- A feeling of heaviness or tightness.
- Restricted range of motion.
- Aching or discomfort.
- Recurring infections.
- Hardening and thickening of the skin (fibrosis)

### **Q. Can Lymphedema be cured?**

A. No, there is currently no cure for lymphedema, however, it can be controlled if managed properly.

### **Q. Can Lymphedema be treated?**

A. Lymphedema treatment focuses on reducing the swelling and controlling the pain. It includes light exercises in which you move your affected limb; may encourage lymph fluid drainage and help prepare you for everyday tasks.

### **Q. What is the best exercise for lymphedema?**

A. A great exercise for lymphedema is stretching. Aerobic exercise is also recommended, as it uses the upper body, helps with weight loss and encourages deep breathing, which in turn helps move lymph fluid.

### **Q. How long does it take to treat lymphedema?**

Manual lymph drainage (MLD) therapy usually lasts from two to 12 weeks depending on the amount of swelling and tissue firmness. Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT) is usually one-hour sessions, four to five days per week. Bandages with foam are worn 23 hours per day. If you have a lymphedema clinic or specialist in your area, please contact them directly, as we do not provide MLD or CDT in our boutiques. However, we will work with your therapist or doctor for the compression garments, wraps, hosiery, or pump that is needed for long-term management.

### **Q. Why is lymphedema painful?**

A. Lymphedema is a type of swelling in a limb or any part of the body due to a disruption of the lymphatic system. It can occur as a side effect of cancer or cancer treatment. The condition can turn painful if there's an active infection in the limb putting pressure on nerves and tissues. Should you experience pain, fever, or redness in your affected extremity you should contact your doctor.