

What to Expect During Lymphedema Treatment

The goal of lymphedema treatment is to reduce swelling and infections, establish new pathways for lymph fluid, reduce scar tissue and improve strength and range of motion.

For the majority of patients, this can be achieved with Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT). CDT consists of:

Manual lymph drainage – A special light massage performed by a therapist to help move fluid to other parts of the body.

Compression – Bandaging and compression garments can help keep fluid out of the arm or leg by increasing pressure to the skin and causing the muscles to contract, stimulating the lymph vessels.

Skin and nail care – Because infections can be a serious complication of lymphedema, each patient is instructed in meticulous hygiene to eliminate bacterial and fungal growth.

Exercise helps stimulate muscles and joints, increasing lymphatic flow.

- During the intensive phase of therapy, bandages must be worn continuously. Bandages can be removed for bathing but must be reapplied afterwards.
- You will be provided with the first set of bandages as part of your treatment. It is recommended that you purchase a second set of bandages to allow for washing. Bandages can be purchased through Allina Home Medical or vendor of your choice.
- Wear loose fitting clothing, especially to therapy appointments.

(continued on back)



Helpful resources

The National Lymphedema Network:

www.lymphnet.org



SISTER KENNY.
REHABILITATION
INSTITUTE

Allina Hospitals & Clinics

-
- If coming to therapy with bandages on, please arrive early to allow time to remove bandages and roll them back up.
 - If a friend or family member is going to help you with bandaging at home, bring that person with you to your therapy appointments so the therapist can teach them how to correctly bandage you.
 - If we are bandaging your leg(s), you will most likely not be able to wear a shoe. If you have a very large, expandable shoe or slipper that you think may fit over the bandages, please bring it with you to therapy. We can provide a cast boot for a nominal fee.
 - Regular re-checks are an essential part of therapy to accurately monitor swelling and the effectiveness of compression garments. Check-ups are routinely about three, six and 12 months after therapy is completed.