

LYMPHOEDEMA

What is Lymphoedema? - Lymphoedema is a swelling which can occur in any part of your body. The word Lymphoedema is a combination of Lymph – a straw coloured fluid which runs through a network of vessels in the body performing tasks such as removing protein, bacteria, dead or abnormal cells and Oedema which means swelling.

The Lymphatics are a system of vessels that run through the body alongside the blood circulation – they form part of the immune system.

Why does it occur? - Lymph naturally drains through a system of vessels back into the blood circulation, through lymph nodes. If these vessels or nodes are absent or damaged the lymph accumulates and swelling occurs.

Primary Lymphoedema – this occurs from under development of the lymphatic system and affects males and females at any age from birth upwards.

Secondary Lymphoedema – This may occur in the treatment of cancer where nodes are blocked or removed due to surgery, radiotherapy or disease. It may also occur as the result of infection, injury, burns and secondary to venous disease or obesity.

How is it treated? – Some health care professionals are sceptical about the treatment of lymphoedema, feeling not much can be done, drug therapies (i.e. diuretics) have little effect.

Lymphoedema is a chronic condition meaning that it is life-long, but treatments can be effective in reducing/containing swelling and preventing problems occurring.

The main treatments involve:

- Skin Care
- Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD)
- Bandaging (MLLB)
- Compression hosiery
- Exercise

Patients are taught to undertake the above (except MLD and MLLB) in order to become self-caring and in control of their treatment.

Clinic Details: Therapist – Susanna Priest. Vodder Lymphatic Trained. Susanna practises in her Nailsworth Clinic and as a part-time bank staff MLD therapist at St George's NHS Healthcare Trust, Tooting, London. This is the centre of excellence for Lymphoedema in the UK.

Clinic Address: EMS Pain Relief Sanctuary, Suite 2, 2 Market Street, Nailsworth, Stroud, Glos. GL6 0BX

Mon, Tues and Fri - Tel: Nailsworth - 01453 836230 or 07867 934677. Hours open 8.30am – 5pm.

Wed and Thurs – London - Tel: 07867 934677

An answer machine will answer your call, as Susanna will probably be busy with a patient. Please kindly leave a message and Susanna will return your call as soon as possible. If it is urgent please contact your GP immediately.