

# Lymphoedema Self-Management Plan

## Patient Information

Long Term Conditions Service

Name: ..... Date: .....

Enabling you to have better control of your lymphoedema, by you:

- ✓ **Keeping active & moving more.**
- ✓ **Eating a healthy, balanced diet & managing your weight.**
- ✓ **Looking after your skin & reducing the risk of infection.**
- ✓ **Wearing your compression garments as advised once they**



The Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website is available on the link:  
<https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets> or scan the QR code.

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## Stable Lymphoedema

### What is it?

A long term swelling in the tissues (present for more than 3 months), that develops when the lymphatic system is not working properly.

### How do I keep my symptoms stable and under control?

- ✓ Look after your skin:
  - Wash, dry, & moisturise daily.
  - Check for changes in colour and for any injuries.
  - Try to prevent damage to your skin – sunburn, scratches, cuts, insect bites or stings.
  - Avoid having injections, and blood or blood pressure taken from the swollen area.
  - Avoid very hot / cold baths or showers, and extreme changes in temperature.
- ✓ Move more regularly / take daily exercise – avoid standing or sitting for long periods.
- ✓ Carry out daily simple lymphatic drainage if you have been taught this.
- ✓ Eat a healthy, balanced diet.
- ✓ Aim to maintain a healthy weight.
- ✓ Drink plenty of fluids.
- ✓ Try to sleep in a bed, not a chair.
- ✓ Wear your compression garment as advised once it has been issued.
- ✓ Avoid wearing tight clothing or jewelry.
- ✓ Get replacement garments every 6 months, via your GP.



## Any changes to your normal?

What do I need to do if:

? I notice worsening of my swelling, or new symptoms like numbness, tingling, cramps, or pain. My compression garment doesn't fit as well.

→ Remove your garment.

→ Contact your Lymphoedema Service or GP if your symptoms persist.

? I develop any damage to my skin?

→ Seek advice from your local Pharmacy, GP or Practice Nurse.

→ Keep area clean and dry.

→ Regularly monitor for signs of infection / cellulitis.

? I notice fluid leaking through my skin?

→ Seek advice from your GP or Practice Nurse.

? I develop any redness to my skin?

→ See next section on cellulitis

## **Cellulitis.**

### **? What is it?**

**→ A sudden, non-contagious infection of the skin.**

### **? What does it look / feel like?**

**→ New onset of one or more of the following:**

- Redness and / or rash**
- Swelling**
- Heat / increased temperature**
- Tenderness / pain**
- Fever / shivers / muscular aches and pains**
- Nausea / vomiting**
- Feeling generally unwell**

### **? What should I do?**

**→ CONTACT YOUR GP IMMEDIATELY – you will need antibiotics**

**→ AVOID wearing your compression garments during an acute attack – replace them as soon as the area is comfortable enough to tolerate them.**

**→ STOP any exercise programmes and lymphatic drainage until it is completely resolved.**

**→ Make sure your limb is elevated when you are not moving about.**

**→ Drink plenty of fluids.**

<b>Useful resources / contacts</b>	
<b>GP:</b> (insert details here *)	*
<b>Pharmacy:</b> (insert details here *)	*
<b>Wigan Lymphoedema Service</b>	E-mail: <a href="mailto:wwl-tr.wiganlymph@nhs.net">wwl-tr.wiganlymph@nhs.net</a> Telephone: 01942 482230
<b>Lymphoedema Support Network</b> Useful information, including access to self-management videos.	E-mail: <a href="mailto:admin@lsn.org.uk">admin@lsn.org.uk</a> Telephone: 020 7351 4480 <a href="http://www.medic.video/?ilf-lymph">www.medic.video/?ilf-lymph</a>
<b>Lipoedema UK</b>	<a href="http://www.lipoedema.co.uk/">www.lipoedema.co.uk/</a>
<b>Active Health - Healthy Routes – Wigan Council</b> For exercise and lifestyle advice and support.	<a href="http://www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Health-Social-Care/Adults/fit-and-well/losing-weight.aspx">www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Health-Social-Care/Adults/fit-and-well/losing-weight.aspx</a> Telephone 01942 488481
<b>Specialised Weight Management Service:</b> for support for those with a BMI of 40 and above (or above 35 if you have associated long term health conditions).	<a href="http://www.wigan.gov.uk/BeWell/Active-health/Weight-management/Specialist-Weight-Management-Service.aspx">www.wigan.gov.uk/BeWell/Active-health/Weight-management/Specialist-Weight-Management-Service.aspx</a> - where you will find the online referral form. Telephone 01942 496496
<b>Think Wellbeing:</b> support for those with low mood, anxiety, or depression.	<a href="https://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/think-wellbeing/">https://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/think-wellbeing/</a> Telephone 01942 764449

Please use this space to write notes or reminders.

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## Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends, and carers.

## Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am until 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager  
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
Royal Albert Edward Infirmary  
Wigan Lane  
Wigan  
WN1 2NN

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## Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the positives and negatives of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



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## How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use, and store the information we hold about you, please see patient information leaflet, Ref. **Corp 006** How we use your information, this can be found on the Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website, see details on the front cover.

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille, and other languages upon request. For more information, please ask in the department/ward.

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