**Chronic Oedema/Lymphoedema - Top 10 Tips for Community Nurses**

Do you spend a large proportion of your time managing patients

with chronic oedema?

Do you always treat patients with chronic oedema in the same way and not get outcomes?

**Chronic Oedema/Lymphoedema is a chronic swelling that can affect any area of the body but usually the arms and legs. This can have an impact on a person’s physical, psychological and social wellbeing. The sooner you treat this, the better outcomes for the patient**

1. **Cause - Primary Lymphoedema** - Lymphoedema can be heredity/ congenital

**Secondary lymphoedema -** Overload, blockage or damage to lymphatic system in

1. **Early Identification** and treatment improves outcomes. Lymphoedema can occur anytime, even a number of years after surgery and treatment. Symptoms include**:**

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1. **Complications.** Complications of unmanaged lymphoedema include cellulitis, lymphorrhea (wet Legs), wounds, skin changes, and skin folds, social and psychological impact.
2. **Medication.** There is no specific medication for Chronic Oedema/lymphoedema
3. **Diuretics** – lymphoedema is unlikely to respond to diuretics. Could be used if signs of associated heart failure.
4. **Cellulitis** – patients with recurrent cellulitis are likely to have lymphoedema and patients with lymphoedema are susceptible to cellulitis and require longer course of treatment and prophylactic antibiotics – as detailed in the(BLS Consensus Document)
5. **Side effects of medication –**There are certain medication that may cause leg/ankle swelling further information can be found at:
6. **Skin Care-** keeping the skin clean and moisturised is important to reduce the risk of inflammation and infection. Skin protection through moisturising; avoiding insect bites, sunburn, scratches and graze!

**Top Tips for patients**

contact Lymphoedema Support Network - <https://www.lymphoedema.org> or download free **© LymEx App**

1. **Compression –** can be achieved through garments, wrap systems and bandaging. The **correct** compression is vital to control the oedema and improves skin conditions!

**Not sure what to do? Contact your lymphoedema practitioner for guidance or referral!**

1. **Moving More -** increase the flow of lymph by working your muscles and reduces the swelling. This is more beneficial if compression is worn. The BLS - [(Everybody can exercise guide)](https://www.thebls.com/documents-library/everybodycan-exercise-guide)
2. **Simple Lymphatic Drainage -** this is a light massage technique to encourage a directional lymph flow. A person or their family may have been taught how to do simple lymphatic drainage (SLD).

**Video/Leaflets at lymphoedema Support Network**

1. **Wet Legs –** Assess to determine a treatment regime including compression and skin care to reduce lymphorrhea and improve skin conditions. You may need to treat above knee.
2. **Red Legs.** Bilateral lower leg cellulitis is **extremely rare**. Consider a differential diagnosis of Lipodermatosclerosis, varicose eczema, gravitational dermatitis, contact dermatitis, fungal infection, drug induced, heat induced redness and an underlying medical condition. [( BLS Red Leg Pathway)](https://www.thebls.com/documents-library/red-legs-pathway)

**Help is out there. Contact your local specialist lymphoedema for advice with cancer & non-cancer lymphoedema.**

**Lymphoedema Service, Name of Service Tel 0xxxxxxxxx Referral details**



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