

## **Lymphedema Management Program**

### ***What is Lymphedema?***

Lymphedema is the accumulation of lymphatic fluid in the tissue that causes swelling, most of the in the arm(s) and/or leg(s). It occasionally will affect other parts of the body as well. Lymphedema can develop when lymphatic vessels are missing or no working properly (primary) or when lymph vessels are damaged or lymph nodes have been removed (secondary).

Lymphedema can't be cured by treatment but can be managed. This takes a commitment by the patient to agree to performing bandaging and wearing compression 23 hours a day.

### ***Lymphedema Team Members***

Physician: Physiatrist, Lymphedema Certified

Two Lymphedema Certified Therapists

Psychologist

Dietitian/Nutritionist

### ***What is expected of me as an Outpatient?***

As an outpatient you will be provided treatment by a Certified Lymphedema Therapist (CLT) to decrease the amount of lymphedema in the extremity. You will be educated on what, where and how to care for the affected limb. You will also perform exercises to assist with lymph drainage and help you return to previous daily tasks and activities.

What to bring or wear to an appointment:

- Shorts/pants that allow easy access to involved lower extremity.
- Tank top or sleeveless shirt for treating the upper extremity.
- Shoes that allow for exercise
- A willing caregiver who can and will assist you if you are unable to perform self-care tasks/wrapping.

### ***Treatment Provided***

The veteran will receive complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT) that consists of:

Manual Lymph Drainage which involves very gentle manual techniques developed to promote the movement of fluid to a desired area.

Compression Bandaging uses short stretch bandaging to improve the muscle and joint pumps, soften hardened skin, and prevent the back flow of fluid into previously cleared areas.

Exercises are prescribed on a patient specific basis to improve the muscle pump and increase lymphatic return.

Skin and Nail care instruction is provided for improved hygiene to decrease infection of skin and nails.

The patient (and caregiver if necessary) is provided self-wrapping and bandaging instructions as well as information on wearing compression garment.

***Expected Treatment Results***

- Maintain reduction of swelling
- Wound healing and reduced risk of skin infections
- Softened skin texture
- Improved skin health
- Improved function of the affected limb.
- Improved quality of life through lymphedema management.

**The Lymphedema Program is located at the NLR VA Hospital  
For more Information contact: 501-257-2990**