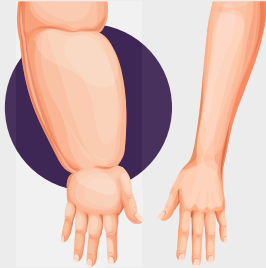




جمعية زهرة
ZAHRA ASSOCIATION



Lymphedema Guide



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Lymphatic System

The lymphatic system is an essential part of the body's immune system and consists of a network of lymphatic vessels and nodes that carry lymph fluid (fluid containing white blood cells) to different body parts.

Your lymphatic system has three main functions that keep you healthy:

Fluid balance: The lymphatic system returns excess fluids and proteins that couldn't pass through the capillaries, helping to maintain fluid balance in your body

Absorption: The lymphatic system plays an essential role in supporting bowel function, transporting fats, and acting as a line of defense against infections

Immune role: Your lymphatic system helps fight off microorganisms that cause infections and inflammation, protecting you from disease

What is lymphedema?

Lymphedema is a swelling that occurs when fluid accumulates in the body due to the poor functioning of the lymphatic system, most often seen in the arms and legs.

Causes of lymphedema:

Removal or damage to lymph nodes: For example, after breast cancer surgery or any surgery that involves the removal of lymph nodes

Radiation therapy: Can cause damage to lymphatic vessels or nodes

Frequent infections: Infections may disrupt the normal flow of lymphatic fluid

Hereditary causes: Rare cases occur due to a congenital malformation of the lymphatic system

Symptoms and signs of lymphedema:

- Mild swelling that increases in size over time
- Heaviness in the affected area
- A sensation that the skin is thicker
- Numbness, tingling or redness
- Tightness of clothing and jewelry in the affected area
- Pain in the affected area after any work or activity

If you notice any pain or swelling after cancer treatment, contact your doctor

Can lymphedema appear long time after breast cancer treatment?

Yes, lymphedema can occur even years after treatment, so you must monitor your symptoms regularly and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

What is the difference between primary and secondary lymphedema?

- Primary lymphedema: It is caused by a genetic abnormality in the lymphatic system
- Secondary lymphedema: Damage or blockage to the lymphatic system due to external factors such as surgery, radiation therapy, or infection.

Can I fly if I have lymphedema?

Yes, you can travel by plane, but it is essential to take some precautions, such as:

- Wearing compression sleeves on the flight
- Moving the affected limb continuously
- Drink plenty of water and avoid high-caffeine drinks

Daily habits to minimize the impact of Lymphedema

-Drink plenty of water: Stay hydrated throughout the day to improve blood circulation

Care for your skin: Clean and moisturize daily to avoid dryness and breakouts.

Exercise properly: Consult your doctor or physiotherapist to find the right exercises for your condition.

Rest and elevate the affected limb: When sitting or sleeping, elevate the affected limb with a pillow

Use compression socks: To reduce swelling, consult a specialist to determine the right one.

Follow a healthy diet: A well-balanced diet rich in vegetables and fiber

Protect the affected area: Avoid extreme heat or cold

Regularly visit your doctor



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References :

- ♦ Ministry of Health
- ♦ American Cancer Society
- ♦ Breast Cancer Organization
- ♦ Mayo Clinic
- ♦ Breast Cancer Now
- ♦ National Health Service