



## Lymphoedema

### Possible Causes:

**Trauma and tissue damage** – Lymph node excision, radiotherapy, vein surgery / harvesting

**Malignant disease**

**Venous disease** – Recurrent venous ulceration, post DVT

**Infection** – Recurrent cellulitis, Filariasis

**Inflammation** – Rheumatoid or psoriatic arthritis, dermatitis / eczema

**Dependency** – Obesity, immobility

**Primary** – Hereditary, complex congenital syndrome e.g. Milroys, Turners

### Possible Clinical Features:

Pitting or non-pitting oedema

Chronic skin changes (Hyperkeratosis, papillomatosis)

Thickening / fibrosis of tissues

Thickened skin folds / misshapen limb

Lymphorrhoea

Recurrent cellulitis

### Differential Diagnosis:

Acute DVT

Kidney failure

Heart failure

Chronic venous insufficiency

Drug induced e.g. steroids, calcium channel blockers

Cancer recurrence

Low Albumin

SVCO

### Medication:

Diuretics are not indicated for treatment of lymphoedema

Antibiotics as per CREST Guidelines on the Management of Cellulitis in Adults (2005)

**An early referral, with less chronic skin changes, will result in an improved outcome for the patient; the team would therefore welcome referrals as early in the condition pathway as possible. Patients with co-morbidities such as obesity, immobility and wounds should also be referred concurrently to other relevant services.**

### Recommended Treatment:

Complex Decongestive Therapy (CDT) is the recognised treatment for lymphoedema and includes

1. Skin care regime / daily cleansing and moisturising
2. Exercise programme and maintenance of mobility
3. Manual lymphatic drainage (massage)
4. Compression (bandaging and hosiery)

### How to refer:

Electronic referrals to each service can be made by GPs using **CCG**. Other referrers can download referral forms from the **LNNI** website (**www.Lnni.org**) and post to the individual Trust lymphoedema referral contact or:

#### Belfast HSC Trust

Send to Lymphoedema Service, Physiotherapy Dept, Cancer Centre, Belfast City Hospital, Lisburn Road, Belfast

*Referrals can be made on the Community Information System (PARIS)*

#### Northern HSC Trust

Referrals should be directed to: Elaine Stowe, Lymphoedema Lead, Lymphoedema Service, Ballymena Health and Care Centre, Cushendall Road, Ballymena, BT43 6HB. Tel No: 028 2563 5202

#### South Eastern HSC Trust

AHP - Central Booking Office, 1st Floor, Main Building, Downshire Estate, Ardglass Road, Downpatrick, BT30 6RA. Tel No: 028 4483 8386

#### Southern HSC Trust

AHP - Central Booking Unit, The Ramone Building, Craigavon Area Hospital 68, Lurgan Rd, Portadown, BT63 5QQ

#### Western HSC Trust

Jill Hamilton, Lymphoedema Service, Adult AHP Centre, Omagh Hospital & Primary Care Complex, Donaghane Road, Omagh, BT79 0NR