



It is also important for you to note any daily activities that may be triggering your symptoms. If available, request any pre-surgery baseline measurements from your family doctor and use those numbers to compare. If you notice increasing and worsening symptoms, notify your doctor immediately. Seeking treatment early will help prevent serious complications.

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Healthy Habits:

Living with lymphedema



- + If you **wear compression garments** to manage your lymphedema, replace every 6 months for daytime garments and replace every 12 months for nighttime garments.
- + When traveling by air, wear your compression garments. **Attempt to move around during your flight** (ankle pumps, knee flexion and extension, arm pumps, arm flexion and extension). **Drink lots of water** and elevate limbs if possible.



- + **Medical procedures**, including blood pressure measurements, injections and blood draws or IVs **should be avoided in the affected limb** with lymphedema.



- + Maintain **strict skin hygiene** through daily cleansing with mild products. Moisturize regularly with low-pH lotion to prevent dryness, cracking and skin breakdown.
- + **Monitor for signs of infection** (redness, warmth, pain, swelling, flu-like symptoms). Notify your doctor immediately if you see any changes or signs of infection.
- + **Exercise with caution** if there is a risk of sun exposure that could cause skin injury or breakdown (sunburns).
- + **Wear sunblock** SPF 30 or greater when outside to prevent sunburns.
- + Avoid the use of saunas.



Understand how compression garments work

- » Compression garments gently squeeze your limb to help move fluid and reduce swelling.
- » The level of pressure is measured in mmHg (millimeters of mercury).
- » Higher numbers = stronger pressure.

Common levels

15–20 mmHg: Light support (not always enough for lymphedema)

20–30 mmHg: Medical-grade compression often used for treatment

30–40 mmHg: Stronger compression for more advanced swelling

How to measure your limb:

- » Use a soft tape measure (like a sewing tape).
- » Measure around the **same spots each time** (for example: wrist, mid-forearm, elbow, upper arm—or ankle, calf, knee, thigh).
- » Keep the tape **snug but not tight**.
- » Measure at the **same time of day** when possible.
- » Write your numbers in the chart and compare over time.
- » Contact your doctor if you notice **increasing swelling or a change of ~2 cm or more**

Sources:

MCBDME. (n.d.). How to catch lymphedema early: A step-by-step guide before it gets worse. How to catch lymphedema early

Science Insights Team. (2026, March 13). What is the best compression for lymphedema? ScienceInsights. What is the best compression for lymphedema?

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