What is Lymphedema?

Lymphedema is swelling from an accumulation of interstitial fluid due to a breakdown of the lymph circulatory system. Many treatments for cancer involve either surgical removal of lymph nodes or radiation of lymph nodes. These procedures disrupt the lymph circulatory pathway and can lead to lymphedema.

What treatment options are available for Lymphedema?

Manual Lymph Drainage (MLD) is a gentle massage technique that blocks pain receptors, increases the formation of lymph and boosts lymph movement throughout the body. The massage is done with pulsing, circular movements that encourage the body to heal.

Complex Decongestive Physiotherapy (CDP) incorporates treatment of all aspects of lymphedema, including:

- Skin care
- Compression bandages and garments
- Remedial exercises
- Self-care education

Northwest Medical Center Outpatient Therapy
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Phone: 520-877-4070 • Fax: 520-877-4071

Lymphedema Therapist: Vicki Stallone, CLT

* Please specify you would like to see the Lymphedema Therapist when scheduling your appointment.
What are the benefits of Lymphedema Therapy?

There is no cure for lymphedema, but it can be controlled with therapy. After completing your treatment program, you should be able to manage your lymphedema independently.

Lymphedema treatment is beneficial for many conditions, including:

- Post-operative edema
- Chronic venous edema
- Lymphedema following cancer surgery or radiation treatment

When should I consider Lymphedema Therapy?

You should consult your physician if you notice:

- An increase in swelling in your affected extremity
- Tightness or tugging or heavy sensation in the affected area
- Changes in the way your clothing or jewelry fit

After your consultation, your physician will make the appropriate referral for lymphedema treatment, if appropriate.

Who conducts Lymphedema Therapy?

A certified lymphedema therapist conducts your lymphedema therapy sessions. This therapist has additional training and specialty certification in Lymphedema treatment.

How do I schedule an appointment?

To schedule an appointment for Lymphedema Therapy, call Central Scheduling at 520-469-8810. Please note that a physician’s order is required and you must specify that you would like to see a Lymphedema Therapist.

What happens at the first appointment?

At your first appointment, a thorough evaluation is performed by the lymphedema therapist. This consists of a physical examination of your lymphedema, including volumetric measurements. The therapist then explains the suggested treatment plan based on the findings of the examination.

What do I need to bring to my first appointment?

Please bring the following items with you to your first appointment:

- Physician’s order, e.g., referral or prescription for therapy
- Insurance information
- Any edema garments you use, if applicable