

Understanding Cancer-Related Lymphedema of the arms and legs

Lymphedema After Cancer

Cancer-related lymphedema is a condition that can result from surgical, radiation, and chemotherapy treatments for some cancers including:

- Breast cancer
- Melanoma
- Pelvic area cancers

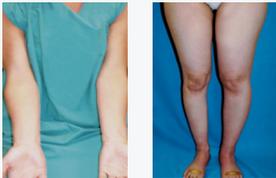
Lymphedema can cause the following symptoms:

- Swelling in your arms, hands, fingers, legs or feet
- A feeling of heaviness or tightness
- Your arm, hand, leg, or foot is hard to move
- Clothes, rings, watches, or shoes feel tight

If lymphedema is left untreated:

- It can lead to infection
- It can become a life-long condition

Cancer-related lymphedema of the arms and legs develops in stages. When it is caught early, before you feel symptoms, it can be treated and stopped before it gets worse and becomes a life-long condition.

STAGE 0	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3
<p>Subclinical Lymphatic system is blocked, setting the stage for fluid build-up</p> 	<p>Pitting Edema Fluid build-up causes swelling; some pitting may appear on the skin</p> 	<p>Irreversible The affected limb becomes hard and increases in size</p> 	<p>Elephantiasis The affected limb becomes very large and misshapen and the skin looks like leather</p> 

Arm photos courtesy of Dr. Charles McGarvey and Guenter Klose. Leg photos from Mihara M, et al. Pathological Steps of Cancer-Related Lymphedema: Histological Changes in the Collecting Lymphatic Vessels after Lymphadenectomy. PLoS ONE 2012;27(7):e41126. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0041126

Prevention

The Lymphedema Prevention Program follows three steps to find early signs of lymphedema and stop it from getting worse.

Test

After cancer treatment you will be tested for lymphedema during your follow-up visits using the L-Dex® score on the SOZO® device.

Trigger

If your L-Dex score increases above normal levels, your healthcare provider will evaluate you for early signs of lymphedema.

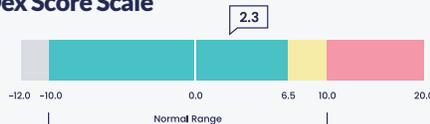
Treat

Your healthcare provider will prescribe the treatment that best fits your condition. For early lymphedema, this may include at-home treatment with compression garments.

L-Dex Score

The L-Dex score helps your healthcare provider know if you are getting lymphedema before you feel any signs or symptoms. It is measured using the SOZO device. A normal L-Dex score is between -10 and +10. Your L-Dex score may be measured before cancer treatment begins to figure out the normal L-Dex score for you.

L-Dex Score Scale



SOZO

The SOZO device is used to measure your L-Dex score. It looks like a scale, but it has places for you to put your hands and feet. You will not feel the SOZO test and it only takes 30 seconds to complete.

