

Lymphedema

(Chronic Swelling)



Réseau de
cancérologie
Rossy

Rossy
Cancer
Network

Symptom Management Tip Sheet



Let's talk about Lymphedema...

- Lymphedema is a chronic swelling, which can happen during or shortly after completing cancer treatment; or even months to years after treatment.
- It most commonly affects the arms or legs, but may also occur in the chest wall, head & neck, and genitals.
- Things to look out for: gradual increase in swelling (you may notice your watch or jewellery feels tighter); a feeling of tightness, heaviness, or puffiness; increased swelling on hot days or after physical activity/effort.



Risk Reduction Tips

- Regular exercises, managing your weight, and monitoring for any changes in your limbs (self-measuring) are helpful.
- Avoid staying in high-heat environments, like saunas or hot tubs, for too long.
- If possible, try not to stay too long in the same positions (example: sitting down for too long).
- Skin care is very important in safely managing lymphedema, because of the increased risk of infection (i.e. do not cut your cuticles for manicures/pedicures).

❖ **Watch out for signs & symptoms of a skin infection called cellulitis: redness that is quickly spreading; increased swelling; fever & chills; and pain. If you notice these signs & symptoms, please go to your local emergency room.**

Managing Lymphedema

- Your doctor may ask you to wear a medical compression garment, which is often used to help control and prevent worsening of the swelling.
- If prescribed, wearing them daily is important (a portion of the cost is covered by RAMQ).
- Physical activity and exercise helps manage lymphedema – so stay active!
- A lymphedema therapist will help you individually manage this chronic condition.

Reference; The Lymphedema Association of Québec.

Other resources

Lymphedema Association of Québec
<https://en.infolympo.ca/lymphedema-information/lymphedema-basics/>

Canadian Lymphedema Framework
<https://www.canadalymph.ca/hints-and-tips/>

More resources at
mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient

Who can help



Nurse Navigator (IPO)

If you have one, please speak with your IPO

This information should not be considered as medical advice. It is not to be used in place of a visit with a doctor, nurse or other healthcare professional. If you have questions about your individual medical situation, please consult with your healthcare professional.

If you are getting treatment at:

- **Oncology Clinic, call:**
Symptom Management Hotline
514-340-8222 ext. 25529
Mon – Fri. 8h00-16h00
- **Radiation Oncology Clinic, call:**
514-340-8222 ext. 24124