



## Lymphedema



### Overview

This is a swelling of part of your body. Often, it involves an arm or a leg. Lymphedema is linked to improper drainage of your lymphatic system. This system of vessels, ducts and nodes carries infection-fighting lymph fluid throughout your body.

### Causes

Lymphedema can be caused by anything that disrupts the flow of your lymph fluid. A surgical procedure, an infection or a tumor can injure or block lymph nodes or vessels. Radiation treatment can cause them to become inflamed or scarred. And, certain rare inherited conditions can cause problems with your lymphatic system.

### Symptoms

As lymph fluid collects in your limb, you may experience swelling, aching and a tight, heavy feeling. Your limb may be hard to move. The skin may thicken and harden, and you may have frequent infections.

### Treatment

Treatment options may include bandaging, compression garments or a pneumatic compression device. You may benefit from exercises and from massage therapy. A procedure called "vascularized lymph node transfer" may also be an option. Your healthcare provider can create a care plan that is right for your needs.