



# PERRY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

## *Medical Rehabilitation*

530 PARK AVENUE EAST | PRINCETON, ILLINOIS 61356 | 815-876-4494

## **Prevent and Control Lymphedema**

How Do I Help Prevent and Control Lymphedema?

- Reduce swelling after surgery or radiation
  1. Use your affected body part for daily activities.
  2. Elevate affected body part above heart level.
  3. Exercise the affected body part as directed by your doctor/therapist.
- Avoid infection
  1. **No** IV's of needle sticks in affected limb.
  2. Keep hands/cuticles soft and moist. Never cut your cuticles.
  3. Keep affected limb clean and free of cuts, abrasions, insect bites and hang nails.
  4. Wear protective gloves for household chores.
- Avoid burns
  1. Use oven mitts.
  2. Avoid sunburn.
  3. Avoid excessive heat (hot tubs, saunas)
- Avoid constriction.
  1. Do not wear jewelry, clothing, gloves that are too tight.
  2. Avoid shoulder straps when carrying purses or briefcases.
  3. **No** blood pressure taken on affected arm
- Avoid Muscle Strain
  1. Exercise, but don't over-tire yourself.
  2. Carry heavy loads (i.e. children, grocery bags) with both arms or with you unaffected arm.

What Are the Signs of Lymphedema?

- Arm or leg feels full or heavy.
- Skin feels tight.
- Hand movement is restricted and less flexible.
- Arm or leg has difficulty fitting into items of clothing.
- Rings, watch, and/or bracelets feel tight, but you haven't gained weight.

### **What If my Doctor Says I Have Lymphedema?**

Lymphedema is not curable, but it is Manageable. Therapy is available to help reduce size of the body part with Lymphedema. Your Therapist will be able to show you how to keep your lymphedema under control so you can live the life to which you are accustomed. They will work with you to develop a program that allows you the best control of your lymphedema within the limits and lifestyle you are used to.

If you have questions, would like further information, or are researching treatment options, please contact your healthcare provider or Perry Memorial Hospital Medical Rehabilitation Services @ (815) 876-4494.