

Lymphedema Prevention

Below is a list of what to do and what not to do for prevention of lymphedema.

What to Do

- Wear compression sleeve for lymphedema prevention as instructed, when flying and during strenuous activity/exercise.
- Participate in exercise/stretching to at risk arm as instructed.
- Use at risk arm in everyday activities as you typically would.
- Participate in follow-up measurements every 3-6 months with OT for 18 months after treatment.
- Look out for early signs and symptoms of lymphedema, such as heaviness and achiness, intermittent swelling, and jewelry fitting tighter at the wrist.
- Keep any cuts or scrapes clean and covered until healed.

What NOT to do

- Do NOT have blood pressure taken on at risk arm.
- Do NOT have blood draws, shots, or IVs in at risk arm.
- Do NOT perform exercises with full body weight on arms alone.
- Limit shoulder exercises to 10 pounds per arm.
- Avoid excessive heat to at risk arm. This includes hot tubs, saunas, hot yoga, and hot packs.
- Avoid deep tissue massages to at risk arm and chest.

Compression Garment Recommendations

It is recommended that you procure a compression sleeve for use on your at risk limb following surgery. On the following page you will find some recommendations regarding compression sleeves:

- After surgery, it is recommended that you wear the sleeve for all air travel, exercise, or strenuous activity (i.e. yard work).
- The sleeve should be 20-30 mmHg level of compression.
- The sleeve should fit from the wrist to the shoulder and in line with your armpit. As long as you don't have an allergy to silicone, it is recommended to get a sleeve with silicone beads or lining at the top to help keep it in place and prevent it from rolling down.
- The sleeve should be kept free of wrinkles or rolling when worn down to prevent tourniquet effect or pressure injury.



- Rarely, wearing the sleeve will cause your hand to swell. This is NOT lymphedema, but rather normal fluid that is not able to move back into the arm due to compression from the sleeve. You can wear a glove or gauntlet garment in addition to the sleeve to control hand swelling.
- If you start to experience early signs of lymphedema, such as feelings of heaviness, intermittent swelling that decreases with elevation, or jewelry fitting tighter, you should start to wear the sleeve 12 hours a day, but NOT at night. Contact your OT for lymphedema follow up.



Gauntlet



Glove