

# LYMPHEDEMA PREVENTION

## AVOID HEAT!!!

Even light burns can irritate and damage lymphatic vessels.

- ◆ Be careful when doing Housework!
- ◆ Be careful when Cooking!
- ◆ Don't wash with HOT Water!
- ◆ Be careful when Ironing!



- ◆ Loose rubber gloves can provide some protection! ◆

- ◆ NO Hot! baths, showers, saunas, Jacuzzis, or whirlpools over 77-80 degrees F.
- ◆ Beware of hot air from hair dryers.



- ◆ NO infrared treatments/saunas.
- ◆ Do not go sunbathing!
- ◆ Use sun block, avoid sunburns



- ◆ AVOID *extreme* temperatures: COLD & HOT
  - Do not use Ice Packs or Heating Pads on affected area

- ◆ No FIRM, DEEP **massage** on the affected area.
- ◆ Light, superficial massage is acceptable.  
i.e. - Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD)



## AVOID INJURIES...

- ◆ Use caution when cutting **nails**, cut them straight and don't cut cuticles
- ◆ **Yard & Garden** work: wear gloves!
  - Avoid cuts, insect bites & heavy lifting
  - Do NOT go outside barefoot!

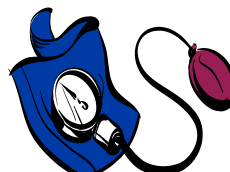


- ◆ Beware of bites and scratches from **pets**



- ◆ Use *extreme* caution with intense/vigorous activities, ie. weight lifting, running, etc..
- ◆ SPORTS: golf, tennis, skiing, volleyball, etc. can also add great stress and cause injury!

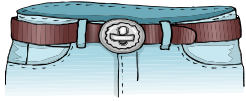
- ◆ DO NOT allow **INJECTIONS**, **BLOOD PRESSURE** or **ACUPUNCTURE** to the affected area!



\*If cut; stung; scratched, punctured, bit, etc. clean & use Anti-biotic ointment regularly\*

## CLOTHING & ACCESSORIES = COMFORTABLE & LOOSE

- ◆ Do not allow your bra strap to cut into your shoulder or chest wall.
- ◆ If you have a breast prosthesis, choose a light weight.



- ◆ Avoid constriction from belts.
- ◆ Avoid constriction from underwear.

- ◆ Don't wear you watch or rings on the affected arm.
- ◆ Wear suspenders.
- ◆ Do not wear shoes or socks that are too tight.
- ◆ Do not wear high heels.



### \* Pressure, constriction and overstrain can damage lymphatic vessels \*



- ◆ Avoid stressful situations, as best as possible!
- ◆ Avoid carrying heavy loads



- ◆ Take a break during big projects,
  - ie.- moving/lifting, crafts, vacuuming, etc...
- ◆ Do NOT sit or stand for more than ~hour at a time



## SKIN CARE



- ◆ Keep your skin clean, moisturized and free of cuts, wounds, and scratches.
- ◆ Beware of cosmetics, lotions, soap, laundry detergents, etc.. that irritate the skin.

## DIET \* Fat cells can compress lymphatic vessels and affect the lymph flow \*

*There is no specific lymphedema diet... BUT a healthy diet is necessary!*

- ◆ Eat more fish, chicken, salads, fruits & vegetables.
- ◆ Avoid greasy meals.
- ◆ Maintain a sensible, healthy weight. If you're overweight:
  - ↑ physical activity, ↓ caloric intake & seek behavioral support
- ◆ Alcohol intake should be minimal
  - Alcohol increases blood circulation and causes swelling



## TRAVEL - take breaks, move around, & do your exercises EVERY hour!

- Wear your compression garments daily – ESPECIALLY on a plane
- If prone to infections have an emergency antibiotic Rx on hand.



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