

# Lymphedema Guidelines

## What You Need To Know

Lymphedema is the swelling of body tissue that can be caused by tissue damage or lymph node removal.

Some risk-reduction guidelines are more debated than others. The guidelines below have the most evidence-based proof:

- Early detection is extremely important to prevent severe swelling and problems using the affected area over time.
- You are more likely to get lymphedema if you are obese. Talk with your doctor about a healthy weight for you.
- You will be less likely to have swelling if you have more muscle mass in your arm or leg. Exercise to improve muscle mass is beneficial.

## What You Need To Do

The biggest risk factor for developing lymphedema is lymph node removal. Because of this, your health care providers recommend that you see a certified lymphedema therapist after lymph node biopsy or removal.

In this visit, you will learn how to exercise and stretch after surgery, and you will learn about the early signs of lymphedema. This will help you with the most important things you need to do for self-care after surgery.

If you do not have an appointment to see a lymphedema therapist after lymph node removal, ask your primary care provider or surgeon for a referral.

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