



**HOPE Lymphedema
Treatment Center, PLLC**
Lymphedema Prevention Program
Lymphedema Management Program

281.242.5807

9914 Highway 90 • Suite A
Sugar Land, TX 77478

HopeLymphedema.com



Tammy Sweed, MLDT
Founder of HOPE
Helping Out People with Edema

Tammy Sweed has been a Registered Massage Therapist with the Texas State Board of Health since 1993. In 1996 she studied in Austria where she became a Dr. Vodder Certified Manual Lymphatic Drainage Therapist.

Ms. Sweed is a Sponsor of the National Lymphedema Network (NLN) and a member of NAVALT, Ft. Bend Chamber of Commerce, American Business Woman's Assoc.

18 Steps to Prevention

Lymphedema can occur immediately post-operatively, within a few months, a couple of years, or 20 years or more after cancer therapy. With proper education and care, lymphedema can be avoided or, if it develops, kept well under control. *The following instructions should be reviewed carefully pre-operatively and discussed with your physician or therapist.*

For Upper Extremities - Who is at risk?

Anyone who has had either a simple mastectomy, lumpectomy or modified radical mastectomy in combination with axillary node dissection and often, radiation therapy.

1. **DO NOT IGNORE** any slight increase of swelling in the arm, hand, fingers, neck or chest wall - consult your doctor immediately.
2. **NEVER** allow an injection, IV or a blood drawing in the affected arm(s). Wear a Lymphedema Alert bracelet (*call HOPE for more info*).
3. Have blood pressure checked on the unaffected arm, or on the thigh, if bilateral lymphedema.
4. Keep the edemic or at-risk arm spotlessly clean. Use lotion (*Eucerin, Lymphoderm*) after bathing. Be gentle when drying. Make sure it's dry in the creases and between fingers.
5. **AVOID** vigorous, repetitive movements against resistance with the affected arm (*scrubbing, pushing or pulling*).
6. **AVOID** heavy lifting with the affected arm. Never carry heavy handbags or bags with over-the-shoulder straps.
7. **DO NOT** wear tight jewelry or elastic bands around the affected fingers or arm(s).
8. **AVOID** extreme temperature changes when bathing, washing dishes - no saunas or hot tubs. Keep the arm protected from the sun.
9. **AVOID** any type of trauma - bruising, cuts, sunburn or other burns, sports injuries, insect bites, cat scratches.
10. Wear gloves while doing housework, gardening, or any type of work that could result in an injury - even a minor one.
11. **AVOID** cutting your cuticles when manicuring your nails.
12. **EXERCISE** is important, but consult with your therapist. Do not over tire an arm at risk; if it starts to ache, lie down and elevate it. Walking, swimming, light aerobics, bike riding and specially designed ballet or yoga is recommended. Do not lift more than 15 pounds.
13. If traveling on an airplane, lymphedema or at risk patients should wear a compression sleeve. Additional bandages may be required on a long flight. Increase fluid intake while in the air.
14. Patients with large breasts should wear light breast prostheses (*heavy prostheses may put too much pressure on the lymph nodes above the collar bone*), Soft padded shoulder straps may have to be worn. Wear a well-fitted bra - not too tight, ideally with no underwire.
15. Use an electric razor to remove hair from axilla. Maintain razor properly, replacing heads as needed.
16. Patients with lymphedema should wear a well-fitted compression sleeve during all waking hours. And every 4-6 months, see your therapist for follow-up.
17. **WARNING** - If you notice a rash, itching, redness, pain, increase of temperature or fever, see your doctor immediately - it could be a sign of the beginning or worsening of lymphedema.
18. **MAINTAIN** your ideal weight with a well-balanced, low sodium, high-fiber diet. Avoid smoking and alcohol. Lymphedema is a high protein edema, but eating too little protein will not reduce the protein element in the lymph fluid; rather, this may weaken the connective tissue and worsen the condition. Diet should contain easily digested protein (*chicken, fish or tofu*).

“Our goal is to make a difference in your life”