

MYTHBUSTING LYMPHEDEMA: Call to Action Sheet

Breast Cancer Associated Lymphedema is Abnormal swelling related to axillary dissection or sentinel node biopsy. Usually develops in the arm or hand, but swelling may appear in the breast, chest, underarm, trunk, or back.

RISK FACTORS

YOUR INDIVIDUAL RISK VARIES BASED ON:

- Radiation Treatment
- Taxane based chemotherapy
- Increased # of lymph nodes removed
- Multiple surgeries + poor healing
- BMI > 30+
- How active you are.
The more you sit, the higher the risk.
- Smoking

WHAT DOES NOT INCREASE YOUR RISK:

Routine Clinical Care

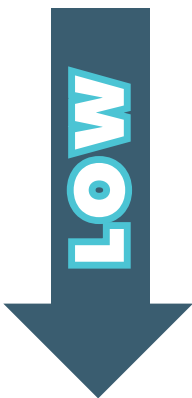
- Electronic or manual pressure cuffs on the arm/wrist
- Needle Sticks
- Vaccines* (COVID-19 vaccine may produce swelling)

Lifestyle and Routine Activities

- Exercise including aerobic, strength, yoga, etc.
- Wearing Jewelry (ex. bracelets, rings)
- Hot Tubs and Saunas
- Massage or Acupuncture
- Flying on an airplane
- Gardening, housework, and other general activities *ex.tennis*

IF I AM AT RISK — DO I NEED TO...

- Wear compression garment to fly, exercise, do high repetition activity (to prevent) **NO**
- Limiting using or lifting my arm **NO** (*once released by surgeon*)
- Avoid exercising with weights **NO** (*start low, increase slow*)
- Avoid push ups, bench press, body weight arm loading movements *ex. downward facing dog*..... **NO**
- Avoid carrying my purse on my surgical side or a backpack? **NO**



WHAT DO I DO TO CONTINUE TO KEEP MY OVERALL RISK LOW?

- Keep skin on the fingers, arms & hands clean and free from infection.
- Maintain and practice good posture while seated, standing or being active.
- Work to keep or reduce your weight to a healthy range.
- Have a regular exercise regimen including aerobic & resistance exercise.
- Exercise regularly. Consistency is important. Strive for at least 15 minutes of planned exercise on most days of the week alternating between aerobic, resistance and recovery exercise.
- Consume a minimally processed diet with 5+ fruit/veg servings daily and adequate protein. Follow the ACS Nutrition Guidelines for Cancer Survivors.

SAMPLE EXERCISE REGIMEN

- Chair Squat + Press (*Set of 10*)
- Countertop Push Up (*Set of 10*)
- Elevated Plank w/ Heel Lift (*Set of 10*)

