



Common Causes of Arm and Leg Swelling (and What You Can Do About It)

More and more Americans are suffering from uncontrolled swelling of the arms or legs.

Why?

There are several possibilities. You could have an inherited disorder or an injury to or failure of your vascular or lymphatic systems.

While failures to one or both of these systems involve swelling, there are marked differences in how they are recognized and treated.

- *Lymphedema*, or damage to the lymphatic system resulting in limb swelling, is abnormal swelling of tissue with stagnant, protein-rich fluid which can cause inflammation and fibrosis (hardening) of the skin.
- *Limb edema*, caused by damage to the vascular system or venous insufficiency, is swelling of tissue due the veins' inability to return blood back to the heart from affected limbs. This can cause inflammation, skin discoloration, and ulcerations to the skin.

Cancer survivors are at particular risk for developing Lymphedema or Limb edema, especially if you've received treatment involving the removal of lymph nodes, chemotherapy or radiation therapy, or if you have certain heart or circulatory problems that cause swelling, diabetes, obesity, scars from burns, radiation, traumatic injuries or surgery, total knee replacements, and multiple sclerosis or paralysis that limits your muscle movements.

Fortunately, Lymphedema and Limb Edema can both be treated by moving stagnant lymph out of the tissues. This helps to reduce and control swelling, soften fibrotic tissue, and improve general health.



The treatment is known as Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT).

CDT has four parts:

1. **Manual Lymph Drainage (MLD)**, which is a gentle manual therapy technique performed by a qualified lymphedema therapist.
2. **Compression**, which is critical to maximizing gains between professional visits. Compression helps to retain the progress made in reducing swelling during the MLD treatment, prevents additional swelling, and supports natural draining of lymph from the tissues.
3. **Meticulous skin care**, which helps to maintain the health of your skin, prevent further deterioration, and avoid infections.
4. **Daily exercise**, which is essential to maintain lymph and blood flow, increase mobility, control weight, and improve your general health and sense of well-being.

Are you interested in getting help for yourself or a loved one? Call H.O.P.E. Life Lymphedema and Rehabilitation Center today at (843) 715-4146 and let us help.