



PHYSIO FOR YOU

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Living with Lymphoedema

WHAT IS THE LYMPHATIC SYSTEM?

The blood circulatory system pumps essential blood and nutrients around the body. While most blood is reabsorbed by blood vessels, the remaining fluid, which contains waste products, becomes known as lymph fluid. This fluid is absorbed by the lymphatic vessels and transported to lymph nodes and eventually to the kidneys and the heart. The lymphatic system is important in maintain the body's fluid levels, immunity and absorbing fats from the intestines.

WHAT IS LYMPHOEDEMA?

If the lymphatic vessels or nodes are missing, damaged or blocked, lymph fluid accumulates in the tissue, causing them to swell. Over the long term, the tissue thickens, becomes fibrotic and fat deposits develop. Skin changes, reduced range of motion and heaviness may occur.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING A LYMPHOLOGY CONSULTATION?

Patients are initially assessed for 30-60 minutes. Depending on the severity of their condition, follow up appointments are between 30 minutes and 2 hours. Assessments are conducted by an appropriately qualified, registered Lymphoedema Physiotherapist and involve both verbal and physical components. All assessments and treatments are conducted on a one-on-one basis in a private consulting room. Treatments of lymphoedema and associated conditions may involve; manual lymphatic drainage massage, bandaging, garment prescription, skin care, deep breathing and exercises.

Optimal improvement relies on the client becoming an active participant in their treatment program and taking responsibility for the ongoing management of their condition.