

Lymphedema/Chronic Edema



What Every Physician Should Know

A progressive, chronic inflammatory condition that can affect any area of the body, most commonly the limbs. It is estimated that up to **ONE MILLION CANADIANS** suffer from this disease; yet most are undiagnosed and not treated. Early diagnosis and adequate management are important.

1 CAUSES AND RISK FACTORS

PRIMARY

- Hereditary
- Congenital

SECONDARY

- Obesity • Venous disease
- Many cancers and their treatments (lymph node dissection, radiation)
- Surgical interventions • Trauma
- Immobility • Infection

2 COMPLICATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF INADEQUATE TREATMENT

- Recurrent bacterial cellulitis in the affected limb, risk of septicemia
- Skin and tissue changes e.g. papillomata, thickened skin (pachydermia), dermatitis
- Chronic wounds, lymphorrhea, lymph cysts
- Reduced function, work disability
- Negative psychological/body image/social impact

3 ASSESSMENT AND INVESTIGATIONS

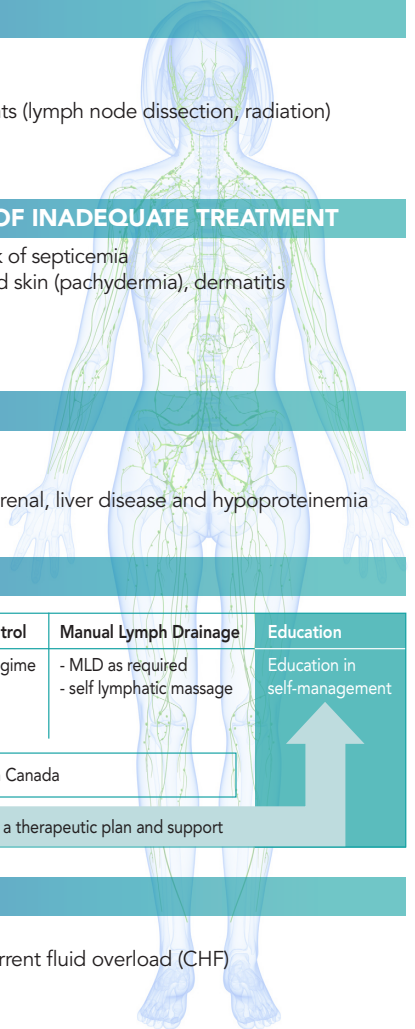
- Edema (pitting or non-pitting)
- Stemmer sign
- Rule out deep venous thrombosis, cancer, cardiac, renal, liver disease and hypoproteinemia
- Identify causes of co-existing pain

4 TREATMENT

| Skin care | Compression | Exercise and Weight Control | Manual Lymph Drainage | Education |
|--|--|---|--|------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- cleansing- moisturizing- avoiding trauma | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- short-stretch bandage systems- compression garments and devices | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- decongestive exercise regime- regular physical activity- healthy eating | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- MLD as required- self lymphatic massage | Education in self-management |
| Surgical treatments for lymphedema are being piloted and investigated in Canada | | | | |
| Referral to a certified lymphedema therapist or knowledgeable clinician for a therapeutic plan and support | | | | |

5 PHARMACOTHERAPY

- No current effective drug treatments
- Diuretics usually not effective unless there is concurrent fluid overload (CHF)
- Antibiotics for cellulitis, antifungals as required



Lymphedema Resources

For more information on treating lymphedema and resources for your patients please contact:

INTERNATIONAL

Visit the International Lymphoedema Framework website (www.lympho.org) for access to International Best Practice Guidelines, Focus and Position Documents on topics such as Lymphedema for Palliative Care, Compression Therapy, Surgical Interventions, Care of Children etc.

NATIONAL

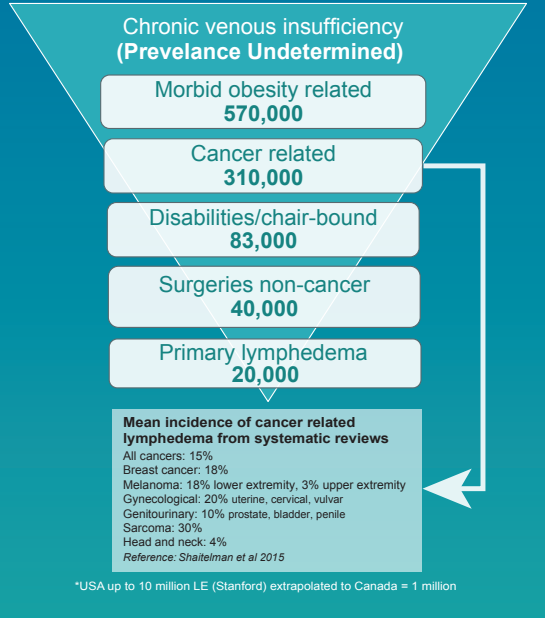
Visit www.canadalymph.ca for comprehensive information about lymphedema, assessment and educational tools for health professionals and how to subscribe to *Pathways*, Canada's national lymphedema magazine.



Prevalence in Canada

1 million* for 36 million population

Canadian Lymphedema Framework 2018



REGIONAL AFFILIATES

Contact your provincial lymphedema association for information on local resources including certified lymphedema therapists, compression garment fitters and patient support groups.

Alberta: www.albertalymphedema.com

Atlantic Region: www.atlanticlymph.ca

British Columbia: www.bclymph.org

Manitoba: www.lymphmanitoba.ca

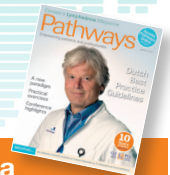
Newfoundland and Labrador: www.lymphnl.com

Nova Scotia: www.lymphedemanovascotia.com

Ontario: www.lymphontario.ca

Quebec: www.infolympho.ca

Saskatchewan: www.sasklymph.ca



www.canadalymph.ca

Empowering patients and health professionals. *Pathways* magazine is published quarterly. Contact your provincial lymphedema association for subscription details.