

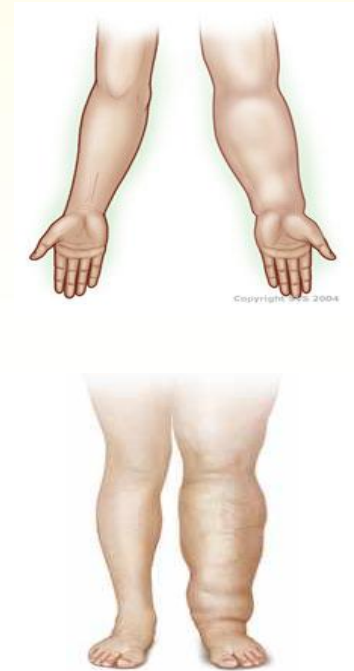
*Cancer Education Day – Dec. 13, 2019*

**Does your patient have Lymphedema?**

Karie Gignac, RN, CLT, OCN, CHPCN

# What is Lymphedema?

- Lymphedema is chronic swelling/edema caused by a buildup of fluid (lymph) which can develop in area of the body which has been compromised
- There are two types of lymphedema



# Primary Lymphedema

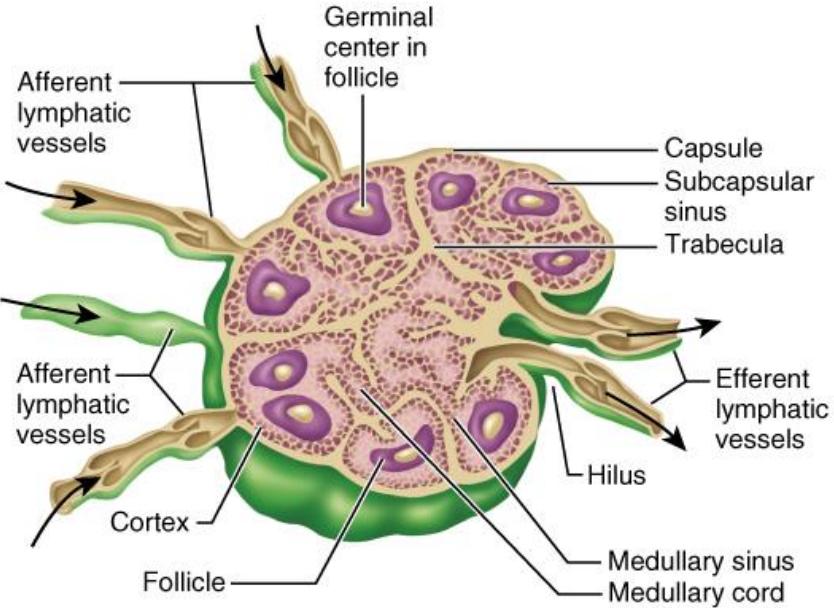
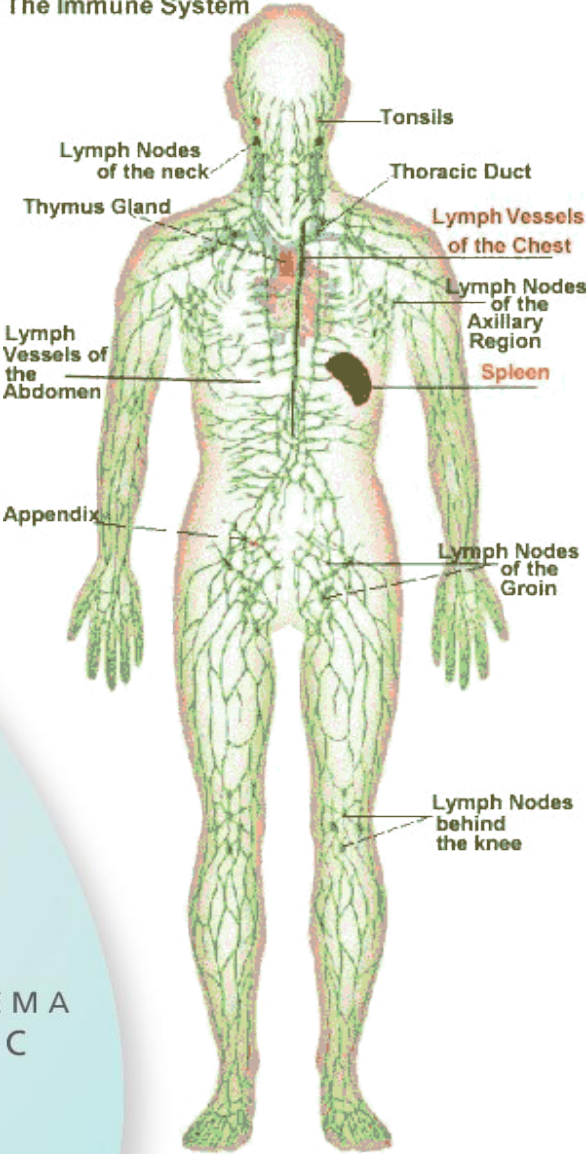
- Rare, inherited condition caused by problems with development of lymph in your body
- Signs of Lymphedema can be present at birth or develop during puberty or later
- Primary Lymphedema is more common in women than men

# Secondary Lymphedema

- More common than primary
- Occurs when a person's lymphatic system is damaged by surgery, radiation therapy, or severe injury
- Can develop shortly after injury or years later
- Cancer treatment for many patients increases their risk if surgery removed lymph nodes or vessels

# Anatomy & Physiology

## The Immune System



(a)

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# 4 Stages of Lymphedema

## Stage 0: Latent/early

No visible swelling  
Patient complains about how limb feels  
Subtle changes in tissue (months or years with no change)

## Stage 1: Mild

Swelling can be reversed  
First signs of swelling in distal limb, elevating reduces it, pitting

# 4 Stages of Lymphedema Continued

## Stage 2: Moderate

Swelling difficult to reverse

Raising limb may not reduce swelling

Later Stage 2 pitting may not be possible due to fibrosis

## Stage 3: Advanced

Extreme swelling

Skin is hardened

No pitting

Painful due to skin tightening and weight

# 4 Stages of Lymphedema Continued

- **Treatment** is best initiated in Stage 1 and will vary from patient to patient
- **Daily compression needed** by Stage 2
- **Palliative measures** in Stage 3



# Lymphedema/Chronic Edema

## Prevalence: Canada 2018

Up to 1 million for 36 million population

### Mean incidence of cancer related lymphedema from systematic reviews

All cancers: 15%

Breast cancer: 18%

Melanoma: 18% lower extremity 3% upper extremity

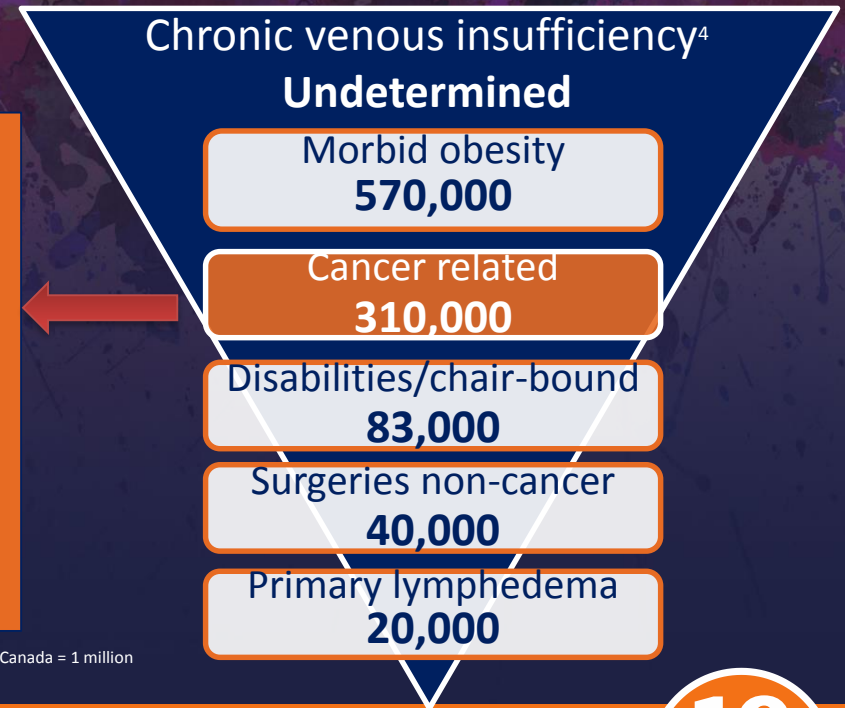
Gynecological: 20% uterine, cervical, vulvar

Genitourinary: 10% prostate, bladder, penile

Sarcoma: 30%

Head and neck: 4%

Reference: Shaitelman et al 2015



USA up to 10 million LE (Stanford) extrapolated to Canada = 1 million

# Rate of Occurrence

- Most clinical trials regarding Lymphedema are completed on breast cancer patients
- In 2017, *PubMed - Medline* databases had over 1400 varying articles on Lymphedema
- **18%** of all breast cancer patients will develop some stage of Lymphedema over their lifetime

# Rate of Occurrence Continued

It is estimated that the following will develop Lymphedema:

- 0-3% of post-lumpectomy patients
- 65-70% of patients after modified mastectomy with auxiliary node dissection
- 60-70% of patients with disease recurrence

*Approximately 80% of patients from clinic within the last 8 years are breast cancer patients post-lumpectomy and radiation.*

# Lymphedema or Disease Recurrence

- Complete the following to determine if patient is presenting with Lymphedema or possible disease recurrence:
  - Complete patient history
  - Evaluation of possible recent injury/infection, new medication, surgeries, recent weight gain, sudden onset
- If questioning, disease recurrence investigations are always needed prior to proceeding with Lymphatic evaluation



# When and Where to Refer?

## Active Cancer Centre Patient

- Can refer to Lymphedema Clinic for a consult (first Friday of every month)
- Use referral form included in your package and fax to 519-255-8675

## Not Active Cancer Centre Patient

- Can refer to Community Certified Lymphedema Therapist
- Will assess patient once disease recurrence has been cleared
- Contact list is in your package

# Lymphedema Consult

- History is reviewed in regards to last imaging to r/o disease occurrence from last Oncologist visit
- Patient is evaluated and health teaching is completed in regards to patient needs
- Self Manual Lymph Drainage, compression garment options, and available resources are reviewed (including community CLT list)
- Assess need for Complete Decongestive Therapy

# Lymphedema Consult Continued

- ADP forms completed by myself as the Certified Provincial Authorizer
- Oncologist signs form (only Oncologist or Surgeon can sign first time)
- ADP covers 70% of compression sleeves if patient has been diagnosed with Lymphedema
- Sleeves need to be replaced every 4-6 months, or compression will not be sufficient

# Compression Options Through ADP





# Compression Options Through ADP Continued



# Importance of Education and Prevention

- Many patient studies have been conducted on patient reported outcomes for patients who were educated pre-op and patients who had minimal or none during their cancer journey
- Patients reported better quality of life, feelings of empowerment and better Lymphedema managed outcomes
- Controlling Lymphedema requires daily attention. Since there is no cure, emphasis **MUST** be placed on prevention

# Lymphedema Education Class

- Anyone at risk of Lymphedema can attend the free Lymphedema Education Class on the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of every month from 2-3pm at:
  - Bluewater Health: Thames Room
  - Chatham-Kent Health Alliance: Sydenham Room
  - Erie Shores HealthCare: Dietary Conference Room
  - Windsor Regional Cancer Centre: Casino Cares Room
- Topics include:
  - Overview of Lymphedema
  - 4 Essentials in Lymphedema Care: Skin Care, Limb Exercises, Weight Control, Compression and Manual Lymph Drainage
  - Prevention, management, and access to community resources

# Resources

- Canadian Lymphedema Framework: [www.canadalymph.ca](http://www.canadalymph.ca)
- Lymphvenus Canada: [www.lympovenus-Canada.ca](http://www.lympovenus-Canada.ca)
- Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ) Clinical Practice Guidelines: [www.cma.ca](http://www.cma.ca)
- National Lymphedema Network (NLN): [www.lymphnet.org](http://www.lymphnet.org)
- National Cancer Institute (NCI): [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)
- Ontario Lymphedema Association (OLA): [www.lymphontario.ca](http://www.lymphontario.ca)
- [www.BreastCancer.org](http://www.BreastCancer.org)
- Pathways Magazine – published by OLA:  
<http://www.canadalymph.ca/pathways/>



thank you