ARM PROTECTION FOR PEOPLE WITH LYMPHEDEMA

The following information will help you protect your body, and prevent lymphedema from developing, or getting worse (if you already have it).

**INFECTION/INJURY:**

You should inspect your skin daily. If you should develop any open areas or develop any sign of infection (redness, rapid increase in swelling, heat or pain), contact your physician quickly.

- Be meticulous with skin hygiene avoid infections. Use fragrance-free, low pH, anti-allergic lotion (Eucerin). Do not let skin get dry or cracked.
- Treat any infection promptly. Clean even small wounds thoroughly. Cover the wound with antibacterial ointment and a bandage.
- Use insect repellent to avoid insect bites.
- Cut nails straight and slightly round on the corners. Don’t tear the cuticle of the nail (use cuticle cream).
- Avoid needles of any kind on the affected arm or leg, including shots, vaccination, blood draw, fluid extraction, and acupuncture.
- Avoid getting scratched by cats and other animals.
- Do not let skin remain wet or damp. Dry your limb thoroughly, especially between the toes.
- Prevent skin irritation. Test any new deodorant or soap/ lotion, etc. in a small area first.
- Use an electric razor for shaving. Avoid blades.
- Avoid lifting heavy objects, or other strenuous tasks.
- Avoid deep tissue massage in the affected limb
- Use gloves when gardening or washing dishes.
- Protect hands from cuts when working or cooking.
**Increased Temperature:**

- Avoid saunas, hot baths, hot tubs, hot showers.
- Avoid long exposure to sun from sunbathing or outdoor sporting activities. Use beach umbrellas.
- Avoid prolonged car or bus travel during hot weather.
- Use a mitt when cooking to avoid burns.
- If you must smoke carry lit cigarettes in the unaffected hand.

**Increased Pressure:**

- Whenever you have your limb immobilized for a long period of time, elevate it if possible.
- Plane flights may require additional external compression (garments/stockings) to avoid increased swelling.
- Don’t take blood pressure in the affected arm if possible.
- Don’t sleep on your arm. Your arm can be elevated on a pillow.
- Avoid “over-the-shoulder” bags.