

Lymphedema Treatment

What is Lymphedema?

Lymphedema is a protein-rich swelling in the superficial tissues of the body. This condition most commonly occurs in the arms and legs, but can also accumulate in the face, neck, abdomen and genitalia. Lymphedema occurs when the lymphatic system is impaired and unable to move these swellings through the appropriate channels and filter them back into the venous system.

Contact us.

Rehabilitation Services
585.396.6056

F.F. Thompson Hospital
350 Parrish Street
Canandaigua, NY 14424

ThompsonHealth.com

Use of a multi-layered wrap including specialized short stretch bandages to assist in the reduction of swelling.



F.F. Thompson Hospital is an ANCC Magnet designated hospital for nursing excellence.

Types of Lymphedema

- **Primary Lymphedema:** Caused by birth defects involving the lymphatic system and can occur in either childhood or adulthood.
- **Secondary Lymphedema:** Caused by surgery, radiation treatment, infection or trauma that impairs the lymphatic system.

Lymphedema progresses through three stages if left untreated. These are:

- **Stage I, Reversible:** Minimal swelling that decreases with elevation or rest
- **Stage II, Spontaneously Irreversible:** Moderate swelling with a notable hardening of the fluid
- **Stage III, Elephantiasis:** Severe swelling with the possibility of frequent infections, weeping, color changes and wounds

As the condition gradually worsens, the risks for serious health complications and decreased quality of life increase.



Application of short stretch bandages for Phase I treatment of Lymphedema affecting both legs

Complete Decongestive Therapy

Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT) is an effective means of treating lymphedema. Complete Decongestive Therapy consists of four main elements:

- Skin care
- Manual Lymph Drainage (MLD)
- Compression therapy
- Exercise

Lymphedema Treatment

Through a two-phase therapy treatment program, quality of life can be restored to the patient with lymphedema.

Patient education and compliance are essential during both phases of treatment.

Phase I

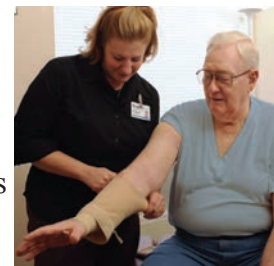
This phase begins when CDT is initiated. Frequency of treatment by a trained therapist is determined based on individual patient needs. The goal of this phase is to re-route lymph fluid, using gentle manual techniques, such as MLD, to healthy parts of the lymphatic system. This will decrease the size of the swollen area and increase quality of life.

In Phase I the patient will be expected to:

- Participate in skin and nail care
- Undergo MLD treatment daily
- Use multi-layered bandages on the affected area to provide compression
- Carry out exercise program daily

Phase II

This phase begins when the affected area has been decongested and continues throughout the patient's life. This phase is managed primarily at home by the patient, with interval check-ups by the therapist. The goal of this phase is to maintain or improve the results accomplished in Phase I of treatment.



Application of a custom fit sleeve for Phase II compression

Manual lymph drainage is one aspect of controlling and maintaining lymph system health. Professional therapy greatly reduces swelling, enhancing the self treatment each patient practices at home



In this phase the patient will be expected to:

- Continue daily skin and nail care
- Perform self-MLD daily
- Continue with self-bandaging at night
- Wear a compression garment during the day
- Continue daily exercise

Lymphedema Therapy at Thompson Health is provided by the Rehabilitation Services Department. Our professionals are dedicated to providing excellent service to all patients. They have been educated in CDT and most have achieved certification through intense training. Our comfortable treatment suites have private showers.

Lymphedema is a complex situation. If you suffer from lymphedema, you need to know that there is hope.

You will need a referral from your physician for an evaluation and/or treatment. For more information on Lymphedema and treatment, please call (585) 396-6056.