

What is Complete Decongestive Therapy?

Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT) is the gold standard treatment for Lymphedema. CDT consists of specifically tailored education and training for each patient including:

- Manual Lymph Drainage: a specifically designed massage targeting decreasing swelling, pain, and scar formation
- Compression bandaging
- Patient specific exercise for reduction of swelling
- Skin care for healthy tissue and infection risk reduction
- A maintenance program including compression garment fitting

*Therapy Services Department
Whitman Hospital and Medical Clinics
1200 West Fairview St.
Colfax, WA 99111-9579
Phone (509) 397-5733
Fax (509) 397-2964
www.whmc.org*



**Occupational Therapy
For**

Lymphedema

*A comprehensive treatment
for Lymphedema and other
chronic edemas*



What is Lymphedema?

Lymphedema is a chronic condition that results from the accumulation of protein-rich fluid in body tissues when lymphatic fluid is unable to be properly circulated. If untreated, parts of the body, typically legs or arms, can become swollen and painful.

After being evaluated by your physician, you should see an occupational therapist that is a Certified Lymphedema Therapist (CLT) for complete decongestive therapy. An occupational therapy referral from your physician is required by insurance.



Signs and Symptoms of Lymphedema

- Leg(s) or arm(s) feel tight, heavy, and/or tired
- Clothes or jewelry are tight or leave an indentation in the skin
- One limb may appear larger than the other
- Pain and/or reoccurring infection called cellulitis

Causes of Lymphedema

Primary Lymphedema is caused by imperfect development of the lymph system.

Secondary Lymphedema is most commonly caused by the treatment of cancer, in the US, predominantly after treatment for breast cancer.

Injury, scarring, infection, radiation therapy, and/or removal of lymph nodes can often increase symptoms of Lymphedema.

Non-Lymphedema conditions that may also cause edema

Lipedema: a disorder that results in disproportionate swelling and enlargement of hips, buttocks, thighs and legs

Malnutrition: malabsorption syndrome occurring after bariatric surgery

Chronic Venous Insufficiency: venous valves do not close properly causing swelling of legs

Post-surgical edema: swelling occurring after a surgical procedure

Other swelling conditions resulting in impaired function

These conditions may also benefit from occupation therapy services.