

HEALTHY LIVING

Learn about Manual Lymphatic Drainage

What is Lymphedema?

Lymphedema is a condition that is caused by the accumulation of lymphatic fluid in the tissues of the body.

There are two types of lymphedema. Primary lymphedema is the result of a congenital abnormality of the lymphatic system.

Secondary lymphedema is more common and occurs when the lymphatic vessels are damaged.

Lymphedema is a chronic, progressive condition. It can cause pain, decreased mobility and decreased independence.

Who is at risk?

- people who have had breast or prostate surgeries that involve the removal of lymph nodes.
- people who have had radiation treatments to the breast, groin or armpit area.
- people who have wound complications.

• people who are immobile for a prolonged period of time.

What is the treatment?

Complex Decongestive Therapy (CDT) is a treatment that consists of four separate elements in combination and is the gold standard for treating people with lymphedema.

A specially trained Registered Physiotherapist can perform these treatments and it is covered under most extended health-care plans.

The treatment usually involves manual lymph drainage which

is a specialized type of massage, compression therapy using special bandaging techniques, customized exercises and education on skin care.

Submitted by Kathleen Rossini, a Registered Physiotherapist with advanced training in the assessment and treatment of lymphedema. For more information contact InFocus Rehabilitation Centre at 905-702-7891.



What is Tai Chi exercise?

Tai Chi originated in China as a martial art that integrates the mind and body to promote mental and physical health. Tai chi is gentle, focusing on fluid, circular, connected movements that are relaxed and slow in tempo and done without pausing. Breathing is deep and slow, aiding concentration and relaxing the body.

Unlike other exercises, the muscles remain relaxed rather than tensed and joints are never extended fully or locked. It is a low-impact, slow moving exercise taking you through a comfortable range of movement but never using force or strength to perform.

Almost anyone can learn Tai Chi. The slow, gentle movements and the degree of exertion can be easily adjusted, making it suitable for people of all levels of ability.

Health benefits of Tai Chi include: stress reduction, increased flexibility, improved balance and coordination, reduced high blood pressure to name a few.

Research is building a case for Tai Chi as an adjunct to standard medical treatment for the prevention and rehabilitation of many conditions commonly associated with age, according to Peter M. Wayne, assistant professor

of medicine at Harvard Medical School.

Medical conditions helped by Tai Chi exercise: arthritis and pain, low bone density, breast cancer, heart disease, heart failure, hypertension with improvements ranging from 3-32 mm Hg in systolic pressure and from 2-18 mm Hg in diastolic pressure, Parkinson's disease, sleep problems and stroke. There are other conditions that benefit from Tai Chi practice such as reduction of pain, easing of symptoms of chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, MS, joint replacements, recovery from surgery, and prevention of diabetic complications.

A Tai Chi Open House and demonstration class is a way to learn more about Tai Chi exercise and how it can benefit you. For more information on a planned complimentary demonstration class taking place Monday, Sept. 22 in Georgetown South. Call or text for more information at 416-239-9318.

—Submitted by Janette Strong, an independent practice nurse with over 25 years experience in the health and wellness field, specializing in drug-free pain management, Tai Chi and colon hydrotherapy.

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Julia Fountain,
BSc, ND

Q: I have problems sleeping. I don't want to take sleeping medication, what are my options?

A: Naturopathic treatments for sleep are most successful when implemented before a person starts using prescription sleep medication routinely. Consider naturopathic sleep therapies as your first option, not a last resort. Re-establishing a healthy sleep/wake cycle has 3 components that work together. The first component is establishing a consistent evening and daily routine that promotes sleep. The second component involves a customized eating plan that balances blood sugar and avoids the top 5 dietary sleep disruptors within 10 hours of lights-out. Individual food intolerances are also tested. The third component is a targeted vitamin program that helps to calm the mind and cue the brain into a new sleep/wake cycle. Additional herbal support is added for women who are affected by menopausal night sweats, and amino acid therapies are incorporated when high grade stress or depression is involved. Now if we could only do something about the snoring spouse...

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