

Issue 4
Autumn
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Lymph-notes

Keeping you in the loop about
St Oswald's Lymphoedema Service

Welcome to the fourth edition of Lymph-notes! If you have any suggestions for features or there's anything in particular you'd like us to cover in future issues then please email patientfeedback@stoswaldsuk.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

Eat well, Move more, Live longer

Change4Life is the Government initiative that aims to improve diet and fitness levels amongst people living in the UK. The campaign is supported by the Department of Health and intends to target the growing problem of obesity in a very hands-on, positive way, by instilling healthy eating and exercise habits into people from a young age.



The campaign slogan is '[Eat well, Move more, Live longer](#)' and the simple message has been designed to create a holistic approach to weight and health problems. It aims to encourage individuals to address all areas of their lifestyle with regards to safeguarding their future health and well being and that of their children.

With winter approaching it's often easy to fall into the trap of comfort eating and staying in more. The Change4Life website (www.nhs.uk/change4life) is full of useful hints and tips for weight management and staying active. Also, look out for a Change4Life display which will be up in the Outpatient Reception soon.

A problem shared

We know that living with Lymphoedema can be hard to come to terms with and adjust to. Every day activities that most take for granted, such as brushing your hair or finding a new pair of shoes that fit can suddenly become almost impossible. With this in mind we would like to ask you if you have any useful hints or tips that you'd be willing to share with other Lymphoedema patients?

To get you started here's a useful tip from Lindsey Summerhill, aged 32 from Cramlington. Lindsey has been accessing our Lymphoedema Service since 2003.

- If you struggle to put your stockings on or have difficulty bending over to reach putting them on I would highly recommend using a device that helps with putting on and taking off your garments. I am using one now whilst pregnant which means I am able to still put my stockings on myself. Please note: Devices are available from a wide range of companies and some are better than others depending on the style of your garment, therefore your nurse can discuss this with you in clinic.



If you have any hints or tips that you're willing to share please either email patientfeedback@stoswaldsuk.org or call Aimee Anderson in the Comms Team on **0191 246 9053**. We'd love to hear from you.

Northern Lymphoedema Support Group (NLSG)

The Northern Lymphoedema Support Network are a friendly group of people who all suffer from or are involved with Lymphoedema. The group meets three times each year to exchange support and information and members of our Lymphoedema Team also go along to the meetings.

The next meeting is being held at St Oswald's on **Saturday 12th October**. If you'd like to come along or find out more please contact Monica Burns, Secretary on 0191 259 5793.

Please feel free to bring along a partner or friend and spread the word to other people with Lymphoedema. The NLSG newsletter is also available to pick up from our Outpatient Reception waiting area.

If you can't make it...

If you're unable to make your appointment and you decide to cancel please be aware that it could be several weeks before we are able to see you again. This is due to a huge increase in the number of referrals we are now receiving. We would be grateful if you could contact Day Services on 0191 246 9050 as soon as possible if you're unable to attend. If you fail to attend two consecutive appointments without advance warning, you will be discharged and a further referral will be required.



Please bear with us and **thank you** in advance for your understanding and co-operation.

Staying focussed

Earlier in the year we asked patients to take part in focus groups with our Lymphoedema Working Groups. Thank you to everyone who took part and for your very valuable feedback. During these sessions we were able to fully talk through patient 'pathways' and your experiences from referral through to future discharge and your views and concerns.

We are now busy working through all of the responses we gathered so watch this space for further info and details of future focus groups taking place.

Shared care

As many of you are aware the number of patients we see within our Lymphoedema Service is growing year on year and as such we are working with some of you to self manage your own condition. This takes the form of our Patient Education Sessions as well as providing relevant information, encouraging joint decision-making and helping you to set your own goals. This is something that is being offered to all new patients who attend both St Oswald's and our Outreach Clinics at Shiremoor.



Some patients may have concerns about no longer receiving treatment from us so we would like to reassure you that we would only consider discharging you at a point when your Lymphoedema is well controlled. You would still be able to contact us at any time as we will still be here for you. We are also currently working to educate GP's about Lymphoedema and our work, therefore GP's will be more equipped to support you and your condition.

Stay in touch...

If you'd like to receive Lymph-notes via email please drop us a line at patientfeedback@stoswaldsuk.org or complete one of our Lymph-notes forms in the Outpatient Suite and pop in the return box. You can also use patientfeedback@stoswaldsuk.org to give us any feedback.



You can download back issues of Lymph-notes from our website at www.stoswaldsuk.org/shop/adults/services/lymph-notes/