



Lymph-notes

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

Welcome to the seventh edition of Lymph-notes! Wishing all of our patients best wishes for 2015. If you'd like us to cover something in particular in a future issue please email patientfeedback@stoswaldsuk.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

Save the NHS £100 for every £1 spent on Lymphoedema

National Lymphoedema Awareness Week is taking place from 2nd to 6th March. This year the BLS are asking you to help save the NHS £100. For every £1.00 spent on lymphoedema treatments that limit swelling and prevent damage and infection, the NHS saves an estimated £100 in reduced hospital admissions! Please visit www.bls.com to sign the petition to develop a lymphoedema strategy for England. Throughout the week we're holding an event for Health Care Professionals to educate them about lymphoedema, it's symptoms and treatment.

New year, new health choices

If you have lymphoedema, keeping to a healthy weight and eating healthily is important. Being overweight puts more stress on the lymphatic system and makes lymphoedema harder to manage and treat.

Weight watch - Losing weight can be difficult and even trying to keep to a healthy weight is sometimes hard so try following the below tips:

- Reduce your calorie intake by cutting down on fat and sugar in your diet
- Eat a balanced diet with lots of fruit and vegetables to make sure you get all the nutrients you need to keep your body healthy
- Avoid crash diets. Losing weight slowly is healthier and you're more likely to keep the weight off for good
- Be patient with yourself
- Increase your physical activity. Exercise can have a positive impact on your swollen limb as well as helping with weight management and being healthier. Through regular exercise you should notice a difference in how your limb looks, feels and moves and your quality of life and feelings of well-being may improve, as well as your cardio-vascular fitness.



Healthy eating - There isn't a special diet to control lymphoedema. However, eating healthily helps to improve our general health and well-being, which is important when coping with lymphoedema. It also helps you to keep to a healthy weight. Try to eat:

- Up to seven portions of fruit and vegetables a day
- More chicken and fish, especially oily fish
- More high-fibre foods (wholegrain cereals, brown bread)
- Keep hydrated by drinking plenty of water
- Less red and processed meat
- Less saturated fat (pastries, samosas, cheese)
- Less salt.

Some people with lymphoedema find that certain foods, such as spicy and salty foods, or alcohol (especially wine) can cause an increase in swelling. Keep a note of any foods you think make your lymphoedema worse and try to avoid them.

Cutting down on alcohol and smoking - Too much alcohol is high in calories and can cause other health problems. It's important to stick to sensible drinking guidelines. More information is available on the Change4Life website.

Smoking affects the circulation and may affect the condition of the skin, which is already damaged by lymphoedema. If you're a smoker, giving up is the healthiest decision you can make. Stopping smoking also reduces your risk of heart and lung disease, osteoporosis and smoking-related cancers.

If you have any questions or queries, or you'd like more advice on exercise you could be doing, please talk to your Lymphoedema Nurse. The Change4Life website (www.nhs.uk/change4life) is also full of useful hints and tips for weight management and staying active.

Our New Structure

We've recently made some changes to the structure of our team and some of you may have noticed that you're now being treated by a different nurse. The Lymphoedema Team has been split into three sub teams with the hope there will be less occasions that appointments have to be cancelled. We also hope that the new structure will enable you to see the same nurse each time you come for an appointment, therefore creating consistency and your nurse will be more aware of your specific case. While the teams are being implemented we may contact you to change your appointment. Please bear with us during this time and many thanks for your cooperation.

As part of the new structure we've also appointed two new Keyworkers which has enabled us to hold additional clinics at both our Blaydon and Morpeth Outreach Services.

Don't be a 'no show' - please let us know!

On average **30 patients** don't turn up for their appointments, every month. If you cannot attend please let us know in advance, as these appointments could benefit others. This also applies to our Patient Education Programme. The sessions are currently fully booked but not everyone is turning up. This is unfair on other patients who are on the waiting list for these sessions. Many thanks for your support.

Correct Information

We like to ensure that all of the patient information we hold about you is up to date and correct. Therefore, we are asking all patients to arrive 10-15 minutes early for their appointment so the admin team can go through a series of questions with you. We greatly appreciate your co-operation with this.

Daylong Prescription Service

If you get compression hosiery on prescription you can now use Daylong's free prescription delivery service. For more information about Daylong and this service please visit www.daylong.co.uk/prescriptions or ask your Lymphoedema Nurse in clinic.

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 at St Oswald's, to exchange support and information, listen to speakers and ask questions to members of the Hospice's Lymphoedema Team.

The meetings are held in Day Hospice from **2.00pm - 4.00pm** and the dates for this year's meetings are:

- **Saturday 21st March** - with guest speaker, Lee Howard from Medi UK

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 Outpatient Reception.

Feedback Bank

Last year we launched our Feedback Bank - a way for patients, families, staff, volunteers and visitors to tell us what they think of St Oswald's and our services. If you've got any comments, suggestions, feedback, compliments or complaints, we'd like to hear from you. Feedback bank boxes and submission forms can be found around the Hospice, including the Outpatients Receptions. Alternatively, you can also email patientfeedback@stoswaldsuk.org. All feedback will be given consideration and if possible, your suggestions will be taken on board and changes will be made. We acknowledge all suggestions where contact details have been provided.



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 Reception and pop in the return box. You can download back issues of Lymph-notes from our website at www.stoswaldsuk.org/lymph-notes/ or we can send them by email or post.