Risk Reduction for Head and Neck Lymphedema

What is risk reduction for head and neck lymphedema?

Risk reduction is a set of actions you can take to improve or prevent worsening of lymphedema in the head and neck region.

The following could worsen lymphedema:

- Trauma to the head and neck
- Infection
- Using a sauna
- Obesity

Follow these tips for risk reduction:

Skin hygiene is crucial to maintain healthy skin in order to avoid infection or skin breakdown.

- Moisturize daily if your skin is in good condition; twice daily if your skin is dry or flaky.
- Apply sunscreen and insect repellent for outdoor activities to protect your skin.
- Clean cuts or scrapes in the affected area immediately to prevent infection.
- Men may want to consider switching to an electric razor to decrease risk of cuts and scrapes while shaving their face.
- Sleep with the head or neck in a slightly elevated position (on pillows or wedge) to increase lymphatic drainage at nighttime and prevent pooling of fluid.
- Continue your home management program as designed by you and therapist including use of your compression garments.
• If you have any questions, please refer back to your lymphedema therapist or your healthcare provider.