

What is risk reduction for lower body lymphedema?

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

The list of risk reduction tips below is not all inclusive, you may have additional instructions from your provider. If you are seeing a therapist discuss your risk with them. If your doctor considers you to have high risk, you will benefit from a referral to a Certified Lymphedema Therapist, if you are not already seeing one.

Lower Body- this includes any part of the lower back, abdomen, buttocks, genitals, or any part of the legs and feet.

The following could worsen lymphedema:

- Trauma to the lower body area
- Infection
- Use of a sauna
- Obesity

Follow these tips to help you prevent worsening of your lower body edema or lymphedema:

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.
- Attention to nail care is important; do not cut your cuticles. You may need a doctor who specializes in treating the foot and ankle (podiatrist) to care for your nails if you are diabetic.

- Apply sunscreen and insect repellent for outdoor activities to protect your skin.
- Clean cuts and scrapes in the affected area immediately to prevent infection.
- Use an electric razor to decrease risk of cuts and scrapes while shaving.
- Sleeping with body flat in a bed or with lower body slightly elevated while in bed will increase lymphatic drainage at night.
- Complete your home management program as designed by you and your therapist. This includes the use of your compression garment.

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by Michigan Medicine for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by Michigan Medicine and for which Michigan Medicine does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Author: Jodie Briggs, OTR/L, CLT
Reviewers: Amber Richardson OTR/L, CLT, Monica Hubbert OTR/L, CLT, Monique Alofs OTR/L, CLT, Matt Ban OTR/L, CLT

Patient Education by [Michigan Medicine](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License](#). Last Revised 12/2020