



# LYMPHOEDEMA SELF MANAGEMENT

**05** **TOP TIPS FROM DENISE HARDY -**  
NURSE CONSULTANT, KENDAL LYMPHOLOGY  
CENTRE

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH





## 01 SKIN PROTECTION

Living with lymphoedema comes with an increased risk of developing cellulitis. Cellulitis is a non-contagious skin infection which can enter through a break in the skin, such as an insect bite, cut or scratch causing the area to become hot, red and painful. Accompanying flu-like symptoms may include fever and nausea.

Avoiding trauma or injury to the swollen limb(s) is therefore vital to reduce the risk of cellulitis.

Protect the limb(s) where possible, by wearing gloves and long-sleeved clothing when in the kitchen or garden, and if a cut, scratch or bite does occur, treat the area promptly with antiseptic cream.

Should signs of infection occur, consult your doctor immediately as antibiotics need to be commenced as soon as possible to keep further swelling and lymphatic damage to a minimum.



## 02 SKIN & NAIL CARE

Dry, cracked skin also increases the risk of cellulitis so maintaining a good daily skin care regime will help to reduce this risk. Keeping the skin soft and supple and free from fungal or bacterial infection is extremely important.

Wash and dry the limb(s) carefully on a daily basis and moisturise well with a fragrance-free emollient (moisturiser) to maintain skin integrity. Don't forget to dry and moisturise the skin carefully - especially in the groin/ genital area and in between the toes, under the breasts or any deep folds. Check carefully for fungal infection and treat promptly.

Take extra care when cutting nails to avoid cuts to the skin. If you see a chiropodist, make sure to tell them that you have lymphoedema.



## 03 COMPRESSION

Use of medical compression garments (sleeves / stockings) on a daily basis is important for those with lymphoedema - especially when exercising.

Compression garments help muscles to encourage fluid back up the limbs to help to reduce swelling. They also provide support which can reduce the aching feeling in the limb(s.)

Apply first thing in the morning and remove at bedtime. Once in place, they should feel firm and supportive yet comfortable.

Ensure you are measured by a trained health care professional and that the garments are good fitting (poorly fitted garments can make matters worse) and that they are replaced regularly every 4-6 months.



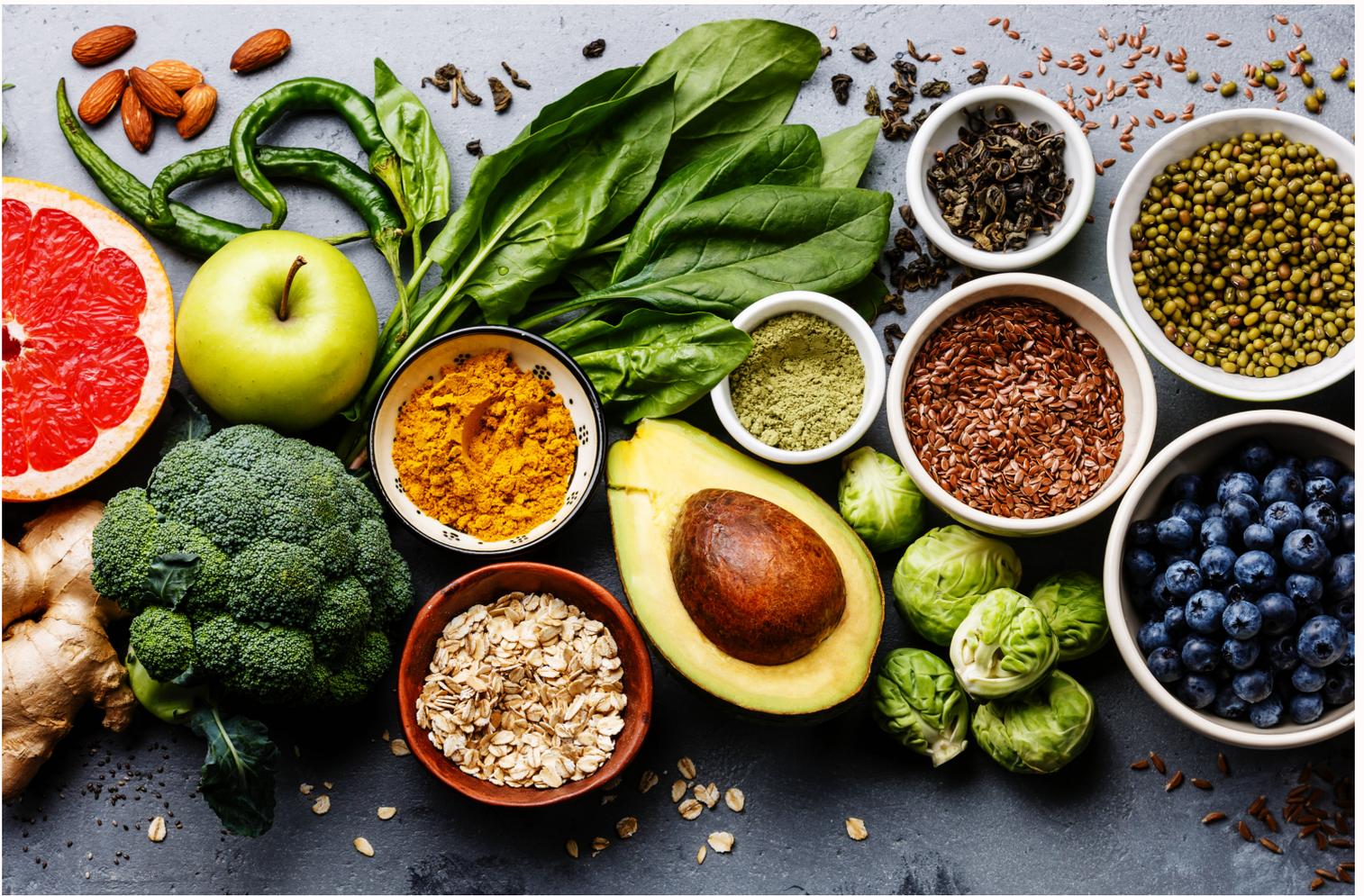
## 04 KEEP MOVING

Muscular activity helps promote lymphatic drainage and reduce swelling (especially when compression garments are in place).

Regular remedial exercises can be performed anywhere - even when sitting. The slightest of movement can make a real difference. Speak to your nurse or doctor to discuss exercises which you can easily do from home.

Any form of recreational exercise is recommended, including: walking, swimming, aerobic exercise, cycling, strength training, dancing, zumba, yoga, pilates.

In addition, deep breathing exercises can help to encourage the flow of the lymph through the lymphatic system.



# 05 HEALTHY EATING

A high BMI can have a negative impact on our bodies both physically and psychologically. Additionally, being overweight can cause lymphoedema as well as make it more difficult to manage/treat it.

It is advisable to try and keep weight within normal limits wherever possible by adopting a healthy, well balanced eating lifestyle.

Be mindful of portion control, and include fresh fruit and vegetables with every meal. Drinking plenty of water will help - avoiding sugary drinks and alcohol - and reducing salt and sugar intake is also recommended.



# USEFUL CONTACTS

## For information & support:

### The Lymphoedema Support Network

St Luke's Church Crypt  
Sydney Street  
London  
SW3 6NH

020 7351 4480  
[admin@lsn.org.uk](mailto:admin@lsn.org.uk)  
[www.lymphoedema.org](http://www.lymphoedema.org)

## For product sample enquiries:

### CD Medical

Allenby Laboratories  
Wigan Road  
Bolton  
BL5 2AL

01942 816184  
[info@cdmedical.co.uk](mailto:info@cdmedical.co.uk)  
[www.cdmedical.co.uk](http://www.cdmedical.co.uk)