

What is Lymphedema?

After breast cancer treatment, localized swelling is normal and should resolve with time. However, you may also be at risk of developing lymphedema, which is a more serious form of swelling that affects the arm or trunk on the same side of your body as your breast cancer. It is important to realize that the symptoms of lymphedema may begin months or even years after your breast cancer treatment. When diagnosed early, resolving lymphedema with treatment is much more successful. Educating yourself, weekly visual comparisons, and monthly measurements of key areas will empower you to recognize the signs and symptoms in their earliest stages.

Body Awareness

The early signs and symptoms of lymphedema are:

- Swelling
- A feeling of heaviness
- Decreased flexibility
- Aching or general discomfort
- Skin tightness
- Hardening and thickening of skin

Consult with your physician or nurse if you notice any of these symptoms. Be sure to provide them with a copy of your "Monthly Measurements".

Risk Reduction Resources

The more awareness and knowledge, you have about lymphedema, the more empowered you are to reduce your risk of developing it. Please visit the following resources for more info:



Lymphology Assoc. of North America
clt-lana.org

Find a certified therapist in your area.

National Lymphedema Network
lymphnet.org

Find therapists and support groups near you.

The American Cancer Society
cancer.org

Search 'lymphedema' for info on prevention.

LymphNotes

lymphnotes.com

Online support group and reference guide.

Lymphedema People

lymphedemapeople.com

Lymphedema stories, articles, and more.



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Your guide to:

Lymphedema Awareness

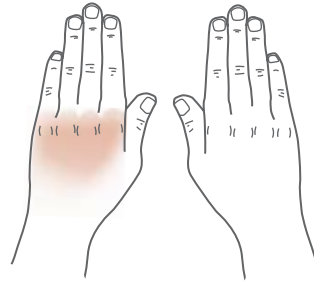
following Breast Cancer Therapy



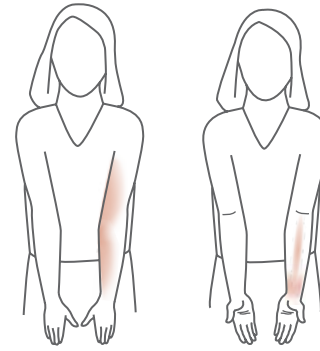
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Weekly Visual Comparison

Compare your arms on a weekly or regular basis following the Visual Comparison instructions. If you notice any pockets of swelling, take your measurements and compare them to your monthly and baseline measurements history. Consult your health care provider if your measurements have increased.



1 Compare your hands looking for pockets of swelling between your knuckles or on the back of your hand.



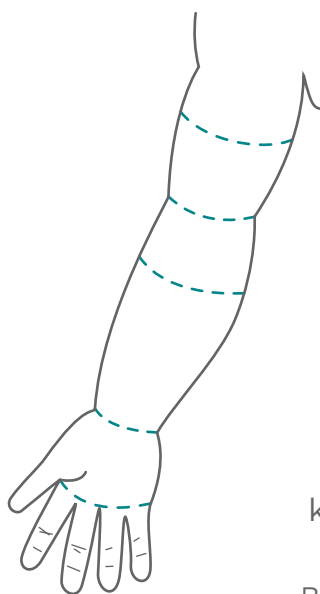
2 With your arms in front of you, palms down, compare the contours of your lower and upper arms. Flip your hands over and compare your forearms.



3 Bring your fingertips to rest on your shoulders. Look at your elbows in the mirror. Do they look the same?

Monthly Measurements

We recommend that you measure your arms as soon as possible to establish your baseline measurements. Use the first two columns to record the measurements of both your left and right arm (for most people, their dominant arm is naturally about 1 - 2cm larger than their non-dominant arm). Use the monthly chart to record your at risk measurements. We recommend using the same tape measure each time that you measure. Some people find it easier to measure the forearm and biceps by selecting a freckle or physical feature that they can use as a landmark each time. If you notice an increase in any of the measurement areas of more than 2cm (or 3/4"), it is suggested that you contact your physician or nurse. If you have gained a substantial amount of weight, the limb girth will change. We recommend that you measure both arms again to establish a new baseline.



	Base Left	Base Right	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
biceps	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
elbow	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
forearm	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
wrist	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
knuckles	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Baseline measurements date: _____ Landmarks for my forearm and biceps: _____