

# Lymphoedema

Association of Queensland



# What is Lymphoedema?

## The Condition

Lymphoedema is chronic swelling (oedema) due to the accumulation of lymphatic fluid. It usually occurs in the limbs but can also occur in other parts of the body.

A swollen limb may result in loss of mobility, discomfort and pain. Coping with everyday activities may become difficult and affect quality of life.

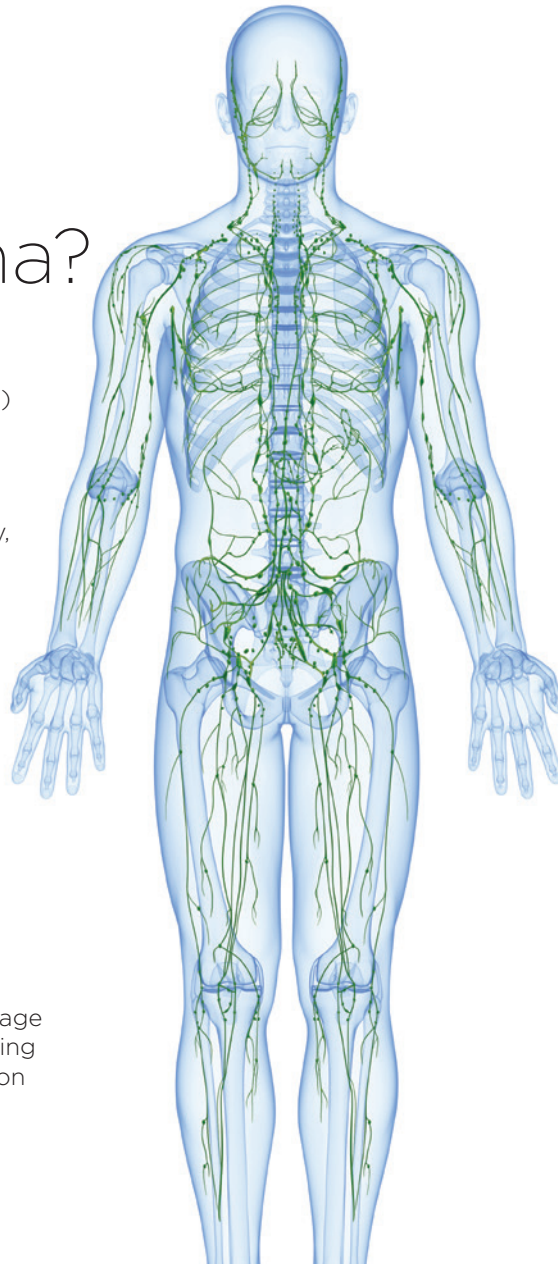
It is not known how many people in Australia have the condition. However, researchers estimate that one person in six (International Lymphatic Framework) may have some form of lymphoedema.

People of all ages can be affected – babies, children, teenagers and adults.

## There are two types of lymphoedema.

Primary lymphoedema occurs when the lymphatic system is poorly developed.

Secondary lymphoedema is related to damage or blockage of the lymphatic system following surgery (most often cancer-related) radiation therapy and other medical conditions and infection.



## The Signs and Symptoms

The first sign of lymphoedema is an unexplained slow usually painless swelling, which may be indented by pressure (pitting). If swelling increases significantly, discomfort and heaviness can contribute to loss of mobility or function.

As the swelling continues, the limb may become heavy and no longer indents on pressure. Changed appearance, altered body image and loss of everyday life skills may result in anxiety and depression.

## The Causes

The lymphatic system is very important. It channels the lymph fluid from the tissue back to the bloodstream, passing through the lymph nodes, which act as filters. It plays an important part in the body's defence against infection.

Lymphoedema occurs when there is a breakdown or blockage in the system, this results in the lymph fluid accumulating in the surrounding tissues, causing swelling.

The swelling is at first reversible but, if untreated, the lymph fluid may become more difficult to remove. The body part involved can become hard and fibrotic with changes to the texture of the skin.

## Examples of Lymphoedema



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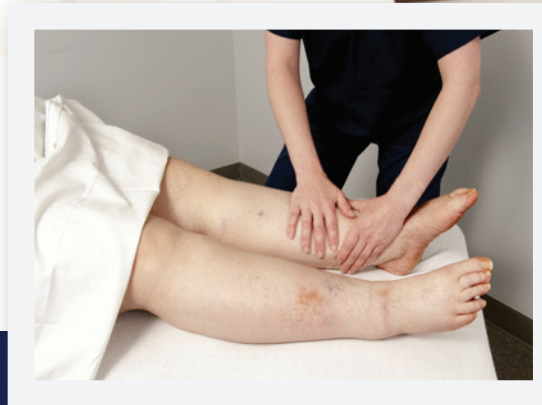
## The Treatment

At present lymphoedema cannot be cured but can be successfully managed. Treatment may include specialised lymphatic massage, specific bandaging, compression garments, an exercise routine and skin care, as well as other treatment modalities.

Conservative treatment is aimed at reducing the swelling, as well as educating the patient in ongoing self-management.

Throughout Australia many therapists have now been trained to conservatively treat lymphoedema. Contact LAQ for information about treatment facilities in your area.

Surgical options are being developed internationally and may be available through private centres in other states.



*The earlier lymphoedema is diagnosed and treated, the greater chance of a successful result*

# Lymphoedema Association of Queensland

## Who are we

Lymphoedema Association of Queensland Inc. was founded in 1989 by people with the condition, health professionals and concerned others. It supports the establishment of local branches and support groups throughout the State. The LAQ also has links with support groups throughout Australia.

The Association is a self-help organisation and offers support, information and education to anyone affected by lymphoedema. It is a registered charity and funds are raised by membership fees, fundraising events, philanthropic trust, as well as donations which are tax deductible.

## Our aim is to

- provide support to those with lymphoedema;
- provide information and education about the condition, treatment programs and self-help for people with lymphoedema and others;
- increase public and health professional awareness of lymphoedema;
- liaise with health professionals in regards to people with lymphoedema;
- work towards the availability of better resources for the treatment of lymphoedema in Queensland;
- liaise closely with interstate lymphoedema organisations and participate in national activities.

## We offer our members

- information on lymphoedema, its treatment, resources and facilities;
- telephone contact and support service;
- regular meetings with speakers on relevant topics, with opportunities for informal exchange of information and experience;
- quarterly newsletter *Node News*;
- a website and social media;
- opportunities to participate in the management of the Association;
- support group meetings – see website for details.

## Membership application form

Miss. Ms. Mrs. Mr. Dr (please circle)		Name	
Date of Birth		Occupation	
Business Name (if applicable)			
Phone: Mobile		Landline	
Email Address			
Postal Address			
		State	Postcode
How did you hear about us?			

## Which of the following describes you best?

- ☐ A person with Primary Lymphoedema
- ☐ A person with Secondary Lymphoedema
- ☐ Relative or Friend of a person with Lymphoedema
- ☐ Professional Service Provider for Lymphoedema patients

## Please select a Membership Category (Fee renewable annually on 1 July)

- ☐ \$30.00 – General Membership
- ☐ \$25.00 – General Membership (Concessional)
- ☐ \$80.00 – Professional Membership

Are you currently a member of the Australian Lymphology Association (ALA)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you completed a training course accredited by ALA? ☐ Yes ☐ No

- ☐ \$40.00 – Friends of LAQ

## In addition to joining I also wish to make a donation of the following amount:

☐ \$20.00 ☐ \$50.00 ☐ \$75.00 ☐ \$100.00 ☐ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE NOTE: All donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible.

## YOUR PREFERRED METHOD OF PAYMENT

- ☐ Direct Deposit

NAME: Lymphoedema Association of Qld Inc.

BANK: Westpac BSB: 034 272 ACC: 12 5179 REF: Membership and last name

- ☐ Credit Card ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

CARD NO

NAME  EXPIRY DATE

SIGNATURE  CCV

## COMPLETE AND RETURN TO:

Lymphoedema Association of Queensland Inc., PO Box 3068, Bracken Ridge QLD 4017



**LYMPHOEDEMA  
ASSOCIATION OF  
QUEENSLAND INC.**

## **Lymphoedema Association of Queensland**

**Postal address:** PO Box 3068, Bracken Ridge QLD 4017

**Phone:** 0403 782 795

**Email:** [info@lymphqld.org](mailto:info@lymphqld.org)

**Web:** [www.lymphqld.org](http://www.lymphqld.org)

Visit the website for details of our Support Group meetings.

### **In Honour of Carole Cooper**

The production of this brochure was made possible via a bequest from the estate of the late Carole Cooper. A dedicated and long serving Member of the Lymphoedema Association of Queensland Carole worked tirelessly providing support and guidance for those with Lymphoedema.