

# Understanding Cancer-Related Lymphoedema

of the arms and legs

**impedimed®**

This booklet contains  
information about  
cancer-related  
lymphoedema including:

Signs and Symptoms

Prevention

Treatment


**Cancer-related lymphoedema is a condition that can result from surgical, radiation, and chemotherapy treatments for some cancers including:**

- Breast cancer
- Melanoma
- Pelvic area cancers

**Lymphoedema can cause the following symptoms:**

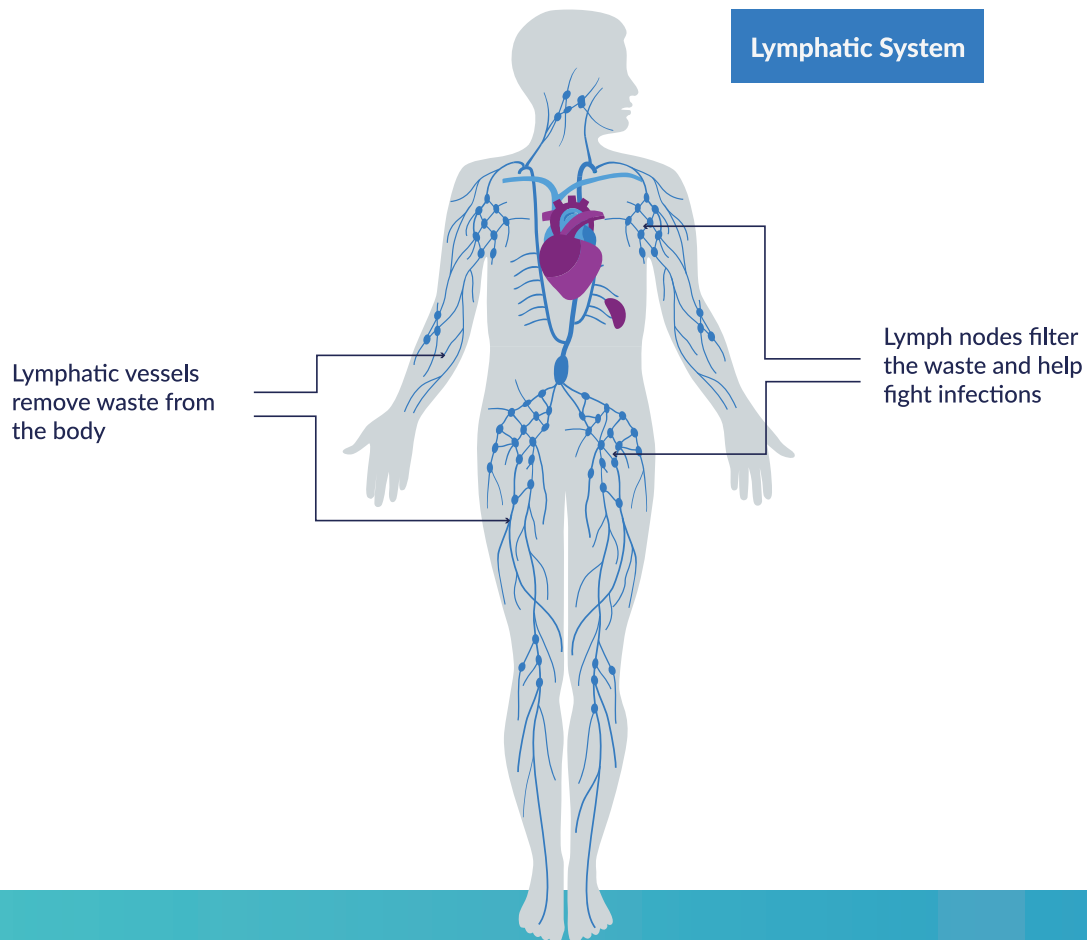
- Swelling in your arms, hands, fingers, legs or feet
- A feeling of heaviness or tightness
- Your arm, hand, leg, or foot is hard to move
- Clothes, rings, watches, or shoes feel tight

**If lymphoedema is left untreated:**

- It can lead to infection
  - It can become a life-long condition
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# Lymphoedema Basics

The lymphatic system runs like a super highway in your body. Certain cancer treatments like surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy can damage and block the lymphatic system. Lymphoedema occurs when fluid builds up due to a block in the lymphatic system.



# Signs and Symptoms

**It is common to have pain and swelling after surgery. After you heal from surgery, watch for the possible signs of lymphoedema:**

- Swelling in your arms, hands, fingers, legs or feet
- A feeling of heaviness or tightness
- Your arm, hand, leg, or foot is hard to move
- Clothes, rings, watches, or shoes feel tight

**These signs of lymphoedema may happen slowly over many months or fast. Contact your healthcare provider if you have any of these symptoms.**



**Call your doctor right away if you have signs of an infection, like redness, warmth, pain, or fever.**

# Lymphoedema after Cancer

Cancer-related lymphoedema of the arms and legs develops in stages. When it is caught early, before you feel symptoms, it can be treated and stopped before it gets worse and becomes a life-long condition.

## STAGE 0

### Subclinical

Lymphatic system is blocked, setting the stage for fluid build-up



## STAGE 1

### Pitting Edema

Fluid build-up causes swelling; some pitting may appear on the skin



## STAGE 2

### Irreversible

The affected limb becomes hard and increases in size



## STAGE 3

### Elephantiasis

The affected limb becomes very large and misshapen and the skin looks like leather



The Lymphoedema Prevention Program is designed to reduce your risk of getting life-long lymphoedema by testing you for early stages of lymphoedema with the goal of preventing it from getting worse.



# Prevention

The Lymphoedema Prevention Program follows three steps to find early signs of lymphoedema and stop it from getting worse.

## Test

After cancer treatment you will be tested for lymphoedema during your follow-up visits using the L-Dex<sup>®</sup> score on the SOZO<sup>®</sup> device.

## Trigger

If your L-Dex score increases above normal levels, your healthcare provider will evaluate you for early signs of lymphoedema.

## Treat

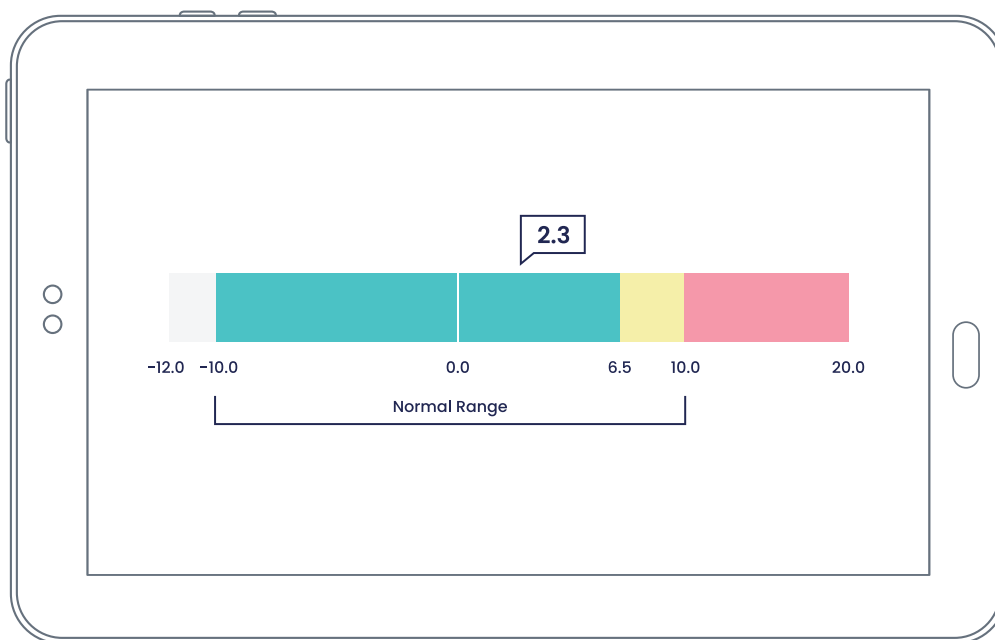
Your healthcare provider will prescribe the treatment that best fits your condition. For early lymphoedema, this may include at-home treatment with compression garments.

# L-Dex Score

The L-Dex score helps your healthcare provider know if you are getting lymphoedema before you feel any signs or symptoms. It is measured using the SOZO device. This early alert allows you to take steps to stop lymphoedema from getting worse – or to avoid getting it at all.

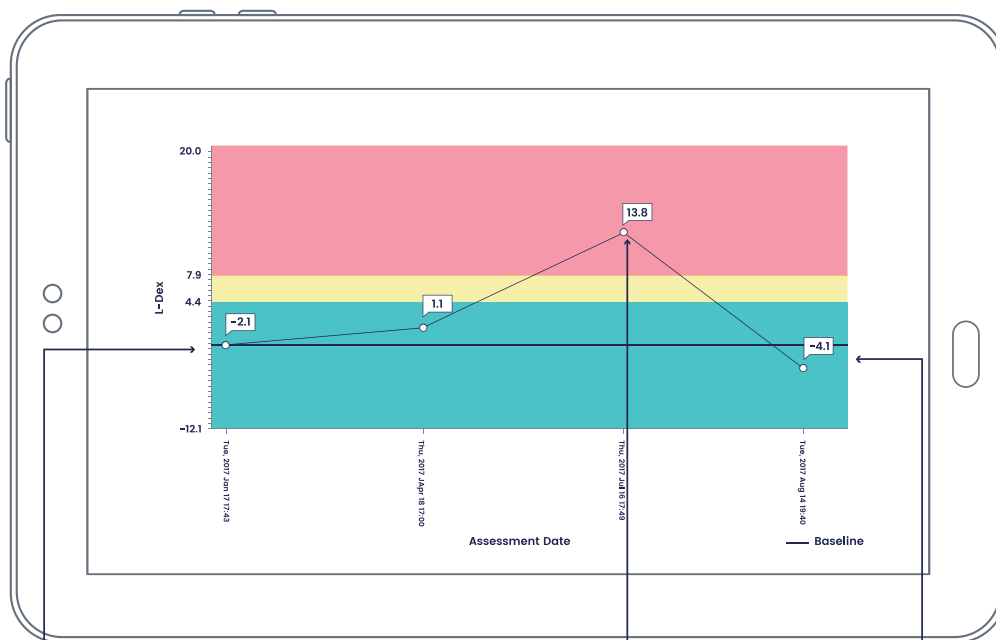
## L-Dex Score Scale

A normal L-Dex score is between -10 and +10. Your L-Dex score may be measured before cancer treatment begins to figure out the normal L-Dex score for you.



## L-Dex Score History

By testing your L-Dex score before and after cancer treatment, your healthcare provider can see changes that may mean you have early lymphoedema and should be treated.



L-Dex Score  
before cancer  
treatment

L-Dex score is  
higher and  
treatment begins

After treatment,  
L-Dex score returns  
to normal range

# SOZO

The SOZO device is used to measure your L-Dex score. It looks like a scale, but it has places for you to put your hands and feet. You will not feel the SOZO test and it only takes 30 seconds to complete.

## Steps for SOZO Measurement

- Remove metal jewellery, watches, and electronic devices
- Take off shoes and socks
- Make sure your hands and feet are clean
  - Your healthcare provider may dampen your hands and feet with a cloth
- Step on the SOZO device and make sure your feet touch the silver plates for feet
- Place your hands on SOZO and make sure they are flat and touch the silver plate for hands
- Do not move while test is running



SOZO Digital Health Platform

# Treatment

**If your healthcare provider finds signs of early lymphoedema, they may prescribe at-home treatment that can include:**

- Wearing compression garments for 12 hours each day for 4 weeks (28 days)
- Light stretching or self massage
- Follow-up testing after 4 weeks

**If your healthcare provider finds signs of advanced lymphoedema that cannot be treated at home, they may prescribe other treatments that can include:**

- Physical therapy
- Compression pumps
- Surgery

## Summary

Lymphoedema is a risk of cancer treatment. The good news is that the more you know about it, the more you can do to prevent it. By following the steps in this book and getting tested, you can take care of yourself or your loved one. Your cancer care team wants to help you so please ask them any questions.

### Additional Resources

American Cancer Survivors Cancer Survivors Network, [csn.cancer.org](http://csn.cancer.org)

Lymphatic Education & Research Network, [lymphaticnetwork.org](http://lymphaticnetwork.org)

National Lymphedema Network, [www.lymphnet.org](http://www.lymphnet.org)

## References

Ridner SH, et al. A Randomized Trial Evaluating Bioimpedance Spectroscopy Versus Tape Measurement for the Prevention of Lymphedema Following Treatment for Breast Cancer: Interim Analysis. Ann Surg Oncol 2019; <https://doi.org/10.1245/s10434-019-07344-5>.

American Cancer Society "For people at risk of lymphedema" webpage. <https://www.cancer.org/treatment/treatments-and-side-effects/physical-side-effects/lymphedema/for-people-at-risk-of-lymphedema.html>. Accessed July 31, 2019.

Position Statement of the National Lymphedema Network: Lymphedema Risk Reduction Practices. [www.lymphnet.org](http://www.lymphnet.org). May 2012.

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