

Lymphedema & Edema Care

Rehabilitation Services



Hours:

Monday - Friday
7 a.m. - 5 p.m.

(515) 386-4284
Fax: (515) 386-3089

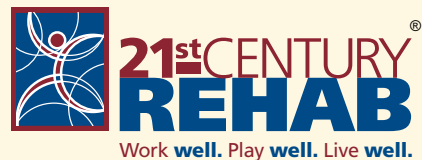
Greene County Medical Center

1000 West Lincoln Way
Jefferson, IA 50129

gcmchealth.com



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What is Lymphedema?

Lymphedema is a debilitating condition of localized fluid retention caused by a compromised lymphatic system. It is commonly seen after cancer treatments such as lymph node dissection, surgery or radiation therapy, and/or traumatic injury to the lymphatic system.

Surgical removal of lymph nodes and vessels can block lymphatic fluid from flowing naturally through the lymphatic system. The restricted flow of lymphatic fluid will then cause swelling in a portion of the body.

What is Edema?

Edema is an abnormal accumulation of fluid within tissues. The build-up of fluids in blood capillaries forces swelling and as a result of such swelling, blood flow is significantly slowed or blocked from blood vessels.

A common build-up of fluids is varicose veins, where blood accumulates.

What are the symptoms?

- Swelling
- Skin changes texture, feeling, temperature and/or coloring
- Aching, tingling, or discomfort in the affected extremity
- Less motion in nearby joints
- Trouble fitting into clothes and difficulty dressing
- Rings, watches, bracelets, etc. feel tight and may leave marks after wear

Why seek treatment?

If left untreated, there is an abnormal accumulation of protein fluid collecting in tissue. This will reduce oxygen through the transport system and interfere with wound healing. This will also lead to bacteria accumulation and various infections. With chronic inflammation, the accumulation of the protein rich fluid will result in fibrotic and hardened tissue.

What to Expect with Treatment

Objectives of treatment are to reduce swelling and prepare the patient for a return to normal daily living. We hope to improve the quality of life for patients and assist in their ability to manage their symptoms independently.

- Manual lymph drainage techniques – which aides in redirecting an impeded area of drainage to collateral pathways.
- Compression bandaging – uses a low to no elastic bandaging method to promote improved lymph flow with compression of the engorged interstitial spaces.
- Once edema is at a manageable level compression garments are used to assist in the maintenance of decreased girth.
- Exercise – with use of compression bandaging to increase lymphatic flow
- Vasopneumatic pump – helpful in decreasing treatment time
- Patient education – important to educate patient on the importance of long term self management, precautions, skin care, nutrition, etc.
- Patient support