

CONNECTICUT VALLEY HOSPITAL

Physical Therapy Services

PT Equipment Procedure # 51

Re: Lymphedema Compression Therapy

Date: July 21, 2010

Description:

Drainage of the fluids in the affected extremities through the use of massage, compression bandaging, elevation of extremities, exercise and skin care. The goal is to remove the stagnated proteins and fluids and to restore the circulation of the lymphatic system.

Indications:

1. Lymphoedema, either primary or secondary
2. Oedema, dependent, traumatic, or secondary to stroke
3. Chronic Venous Insufficiency
4. Severe arteriosclerosis or other ischemic vascular diseases

Contraindications:

1. Known or suspected acute deep vein thrombosis
2. Severe Congestive Cardiac Failure
3. Any local condition in which garments or dressings would interfere.

Procedure:

1. The patient's medical history is reviewed and a complete Physical Therapy Assessment is to be completed. Circumferential measurements are taken. Pain levels should be assessed before and after each treatment session to gauge the patient's ability to tolerate the treatments, dressings and garments.
2. Explain the procedure to the patient.
3. Identify the extremities to be treated. Remove all garments, dressings, creams and topicals covering the area to be treated. Position the patient with the extremity (extremities) elevated and drape the patient for comfort, modesty and easy accessibility.
4. Hygiene of the extremities is essential for preventing infection and decreasing the possibility of recurring bouts. This also decreases skin irritation from dead tissue or old creams or topicals.
5. Massage is provided to assist in lymphatic drainage of the limb.
6. A lymphatic exercise program is essential to assist in reducing the volume of the extremity (extremities) and to improve the functionality and mobility of the extremity

(extremities). These exercises should continue on an independent basis after treatment is terminated to assist in preventing reoccurrence.

7. The appropriate type and fit compression dressings are applied circumferentially working distal to proximal on the extremity (extremities) being treated with tape or another adhesive being applied to secure the dressings in the proper position. Dressings should be worn at all times to maintain compression. If dressings are removed, the extremity (extremities) involved should be elevated.
8. Patient education should include to an exercise program, side effects of dressings and garments, independent donning and doffing of the dressings and garments, weight management, and the desired outcome of treatment. Tight clothing or jewelry should be avoided.

Care of Lymphedema Compression Dressings

1. The compression dressings are for single patient only. They are removed from the patient's extremity (extremities) and the securing mechanism (usually tape) is discarded.
2. All disposable/one time use dressings are discarded properly.
3. The reusable dressings are washed according to the approved hospital procedure for washing clothes.
4. The dressings are then air dried thoroughly before reuse.