

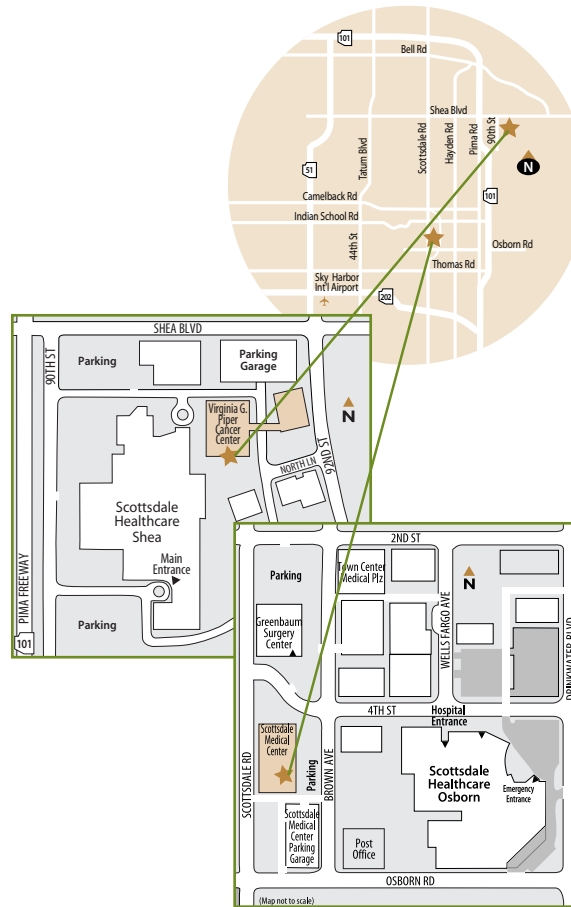
Lymphedema Treatment Center

Patient Guide



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Personalizing Health



The Lymphedema Treatment Center is a proud supporter of the National Lymphedema Network as a Sponsoring Treatment Center.

Virginia G. Piper Cancer Center at Scottsdale Healthcare Shea

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480-323-1233, Fax: 480-323-1239

Virginia G. Piper Cancer Center Osborn Branch

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What is lymphedema?

Lymphedema is a chronic swelling in part of the body (usually arm or leg) due to accumulation of lymph fluid (protein and water) in the tissue spaces as a result of obstruction of veins and/or lymphatic vessels.

Why should lymphedema be treated?

Before this question can be answered, an understanding of the lymphatic system's normal function is necessary.

The lymphatic system is part of the circulatory system in addition to veins and arteries. It removes impurities (including bacteria and cancer cells) from the circulatory system and produces disease-fighting cells (lymphocytes) for the immune system.

If untreated, lymphedema creates a stagnant environment of protein-rich fluid causing lymph channels to increase in size and number. It interferes with wound healing and provides an environment that promotes bacterial growth, which increases the potential for infection. If swelling and inflammation persist, the tissue thickens and hardens. This leads to decreased active motion, which can intensify the problem.



Lymphedema Treatment Center

Questions Often Asked

What are the types and causes of lymphedema?

- Primary Lymphedema may be caused by malformation of the lymph vessels. It may be present at birth or may develop later in life.
- Secondary Lymphedema is a result of damage to the lymphatic system. Causes may include traumatic injury, infection, chronic venous insufficiency and wounds. Surgical procedures such as mastectomy, lumpectomy, coronary bypass, prostatectomy, total joint replacement, radiation therapy and removal of lymph nodes can also cause lymphedema.

Can lymphedema be cured?

With early intervention and proper treatment, lymphedema can be controlled, allowing the individual to lead a full, functional life. Frequently, however, it is a persistent condition. It is essential to manage lymphedema. Techniques exist to reduce swelling and manage its other side effects.

What treatments are available?

In a warm, friendly environment, the center offers a comprehensive treatment approach tailored to the individual's needs.

After evaluation, a typical Phase I treatment program may include any or all of the following:

- Manual Lymph Drainage – Using a non-invasive, manual therapy technique, lymph fluid is drained from the affected extremity's superficial lymph vessels.
- Compression Bandaging – The affected extremity is wrapped with low-stretch bandages, resulting in fluid reduction.
- Sequential Compression Pumps – In some cases the therapist may use compression pumps in conjunction with manual lymph drainage. Some patients also use sequential compression pumps at home when needed.
- Skin Care Management and Treatment – Essential to the overall success of lymphedema therapy by keeping tissue healthy and maximizing skin nutrition. Our therapists look closely for early signs of infection.
- Therapeutic Exercise – Exercise, including flexibility, strengthening and aerobic activities often helps the lymphatic system drain excess fluids.
- Kinesio Taping® – Based on the body's natural healing process, this technique activates neurological and circulatory systems to facilitate the fluid flow.
- Self-management Instruction

Services offered:

- Assistance in selecting medical compression garments and supplies for therapeutic home programs
- Phase II Exercise and Maintenance Programs

Who is a candidate for treatment?

Individuals whose cancer operation included lymph node removal and who have any swelling of the arm, hand, chest, leg, face or any other part of the body are candidates for evaluation. Individuals who have swelling due to diabetes, joint replacements, joint fractures, wounds that are not healing or swelling that just develops are also candidates. If there is a question regarding active cancer or infections, a physician's review is required.

Where is this comprehensive treatment approach available?

The Lymphedema Treatment Center is a service available through Scottsdale Healthcare Virginia G. Piper Cancer Center; 480-882-6050 (Osborn) or 480-323-1233 (Shea). Our therapists are LANA-certified in the assessment and treatment of lymphedema. The Virginia G. Piper Cancer Center's Lymphedema Center is the only Arizona-sponsored National Lymphedema Network facility.

How can I get help?

Anyone can contact the Lymphedema Treatment Center for information and assistance.

However, since the therapy we provide is medical, we require a physician referral to initiate treatment. The referral can be obtained through your physician. To schedule an appointment, call 480-882-4703.