



### Signs and symptoms

- › Sensation of heaviness or aching in arm or leg
- › Burning or tingling sensation radiating down arm or leg
- › Sudden feeling that clothing or jewelry is too tight

### Why is treatment important?

If not treated, lymph fluid accumulates in limbs eventually resulting in hardening tissue. At first, swelling may resolve after rest. As it progresses, the lymph stays large and when pressed indicates "pitting" edema. Further progression, leads to hard fibrotic tissue which is prone to infection.

### Two locations to serve you

#### CLINTON TOWNSHIP

37055 South Gratiot  
Clinton Township, MI 48036  
(586) 783-9581

#### RICHMOND-LENOX

66440 Gratiot Ave., Suite 102  
Lenox Township, MI 48050  
(586) 430-4027



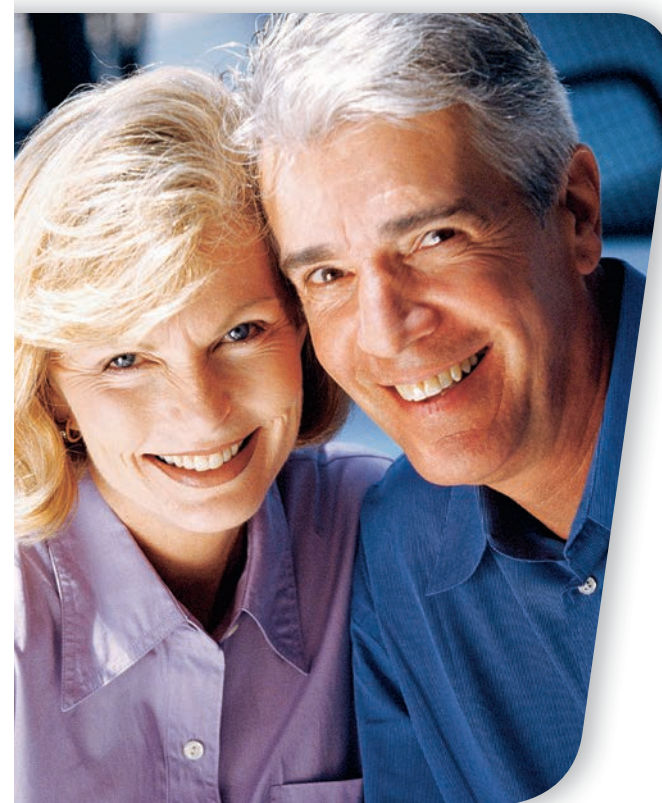
MACOMB

1000 Harrington Blvd., Mount Clemens, MI 48043  
(586) 493-8000

[mclaren.org/macomb](http://mclaren.org/macomb)

# Lymphedema Management

*"As gentle as a butterfly kiss"*



MACOMB

# What is Lymphedema?

Lymphedema is a swelling caused by abnormal accumulation of lymph in the body.

## Who is at risk?

Some people are born with fewer than normal lymph nodes. Others may have lymph nodes removed during surgery or damaged by injuries. People with history of blood clots and (or) circulation problems are at risk as well.

## What causes lymphedema?

Swelling problems in at-risk individuals can emerge when their already compromised lymphatic system is forced to work harder.

Surgery, radiation, infection and injury are common events that can contribute to the onset of lymphedema.

## When does lymphedema occur?

Lymphedema may occur immediately after an injury or removal of lymph nodes. It may also emerge weeks, months or even years later.

Often when the onset of swelling is delayed, it is triggered by specific events. Trivial events even sunburn can start swelling problems in at-risk patients.



## How is lymphedema treated?

Our program encourages self-care through management of the involved extremities with bandaging, exercises and self-massage. Manual lymphatic mobilization by a qualified physical therapist is also an essential part of the program.

### Phase One (last 2-6 weeks)

- Bandaging
- Exercise
- Manual Lymphatic Mobilization
- Patient Education

### Phase Two (lifelong management)

- Self-bandaging at night
- Pressure garment during the day
- Self massage
- Skin care and protective measures

## How can I receive treatment?

A prescription from your doctor is required. Patients need a compressive garment fit by a trained lymphedema vendor.

## What is the lymphatic system?

The lymphatic system is part of the body's circulatory system important for moving and filtering lymph. Lymph is clear protein-enriched fluid that is absorbed from the bloodstream to lymph nodes and back.

The lymphatic system can be thought of as the body's garbage collecting system. Cells located in lymph nodes break down waste products, cleaning the lymph fluid before returning it to the heart.