

F.L.E.C.S - Foot Hygiene, Leg Elevation, Exercise, Compression Therapy and Skin Care

Foot Hygiene

- Ensure feet are kept clean and dry. Dry carefully between toes. If a fungal infection (athlete's foot) is present, use an antifungal powder. Ensure you care for your own nails or see podiatrist (chiroprapist) and wear supportive, correctly fitting footwear.

Leg Elevation

- Ensure legs are elevated whenever you are sitting. Support legs with a foot stool, reclining chair or up on sofa so your legs are to the height of your hips. This helps improve the circulation back to your heart
- Do not cross your legs when they are elevated
- Try to sleep in your bed overnight which helps reduce swelling, rather than sleeping in a chair with legs down

Exercise and Diet

- Aim to be as active as possible; this will help with limb swelling and improve blood flow. If you are unable to walk long distances, seated exercises should be encouraged.
- Eating a healthy balanced diet provides nutrients to your body. If you are overweight, losing weight can help improve your health and reduce the pressure on your chronic oedema/swelling.

Compression Therapy

- If compression/support stockings/tights/socks have been prescribed, you must wear them to reduce the excess in fluid in your legs
- If not, you can purchase from the local pharmacy or local supermarket, for example compression liners/flight socks and light support tights. If you are diabetic or have known peripheral arterial disease (diagnosed poor circulation) advice should be sought from your GP first.

Skin Care

- Your skin is at risk when you have leg swelling. Treat any cuts and grazes promptly by cleansing the area and applying a simple dressing. Seek appropriate health care practitioner advice if required. This could be a local chemist in the first instance.
- Provide good skin care; apply simple emollients/ non perfumed moisturisers before bed each night.
- If leg cellulitis is suspected – this may present as redness or warmth in one of your legs along with any of the following symptoms – painful swelling in the area that wasn't there before, pain in the leg, blisters, high temperature or fever, vomiting, headache – **please seek a medical review immediately.**
- Make an appointment with your GP practice and ask to be reviewed if your swelling does not resolve within 3 months. Unless this has been a long-term problem.