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March is Lymphedema Awareness Month

Lymphedema is a chronic condition that often manifests as an abnormal buildup of fluid, most commonly in the arms or legs. This swelling may be present at birth or develop without a known reason. Lymphedema can also develop as a result of another condition or treatment that damages the lymph nodes or lymph vessels, such as cancer treatment. Initially reversible, lymphedema typically progresses to irreversible, restricting range of motion and limiting activities of daily living. One of the most common causes of lymphedema occurs when lymph nodes from the underarm, called axillary lymph nodes, are damaged or removed during a mastectomy or lumpectomy for the treatment of breast cancer.

We want to help your patients dealing with chronic lymphedema whether it is related to a cancer diagnosis, a defect in the lymphatic system, or related to chronic venous insufficiency. We employ certified lymphedema therapists with 135 hours of specific training and have years of experience in lymphedema treatment. Patients affected by lymphedema have a much better outcome if treated early in the lymphedema disease process.

What does lymphedema treatment consist of?

Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT) is the gold standard for lymphedema treatment. It consists of 4 main components:

- 1) Compression therapy
- 2) Manual lymphatic drainage
- 3) Decongestive exercises
- 4) Instruction in proper skin and nail care

6 THINGS YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT LYMPHEDEMA

1 Lymphedema is chronic swelling caused by a build-up of fluid that occurs when the lymphatic system is either faulty or damaged.

Damaged vessels blocking the normal flow of lymphatic fluid

3 Most physicians in the United States are taught about the lymphatic system for 1 hour or less during their 4 years of medical school training.

4 There is no known cure for lymphedema, but it can be effectively treated. Compression therapy is the most critical component of treatment. Without it, patients are at increased risk for complications and disability.

5 Medicare, and many private insurance policies do NOT cover compression garments, wraps, or bandages – the supplies needed for compression therapy.

6 The Lymphedema Treatment Act is a bill, currently in Congress, that aims to improve insurance coverage for compression supplies, allowing lymphedema patients to maintain a healthy and productive life.

2 An estimated 3-5 million Americans suffer from lymphedema—including many that are undiagnosed or undertreated. That is more than ALS, Cystic Fibrosis, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, and Parkinson's Disease combined.

2 out of 5 breast cancer patients will develop lymphedema within 5 years of surgery.

Swollen tissue due to buildup of lymphatic fluid

Causes of Lymphatic Dysfunction

- A. Lymph node removal for cancer treatment
- B. Injury to lymphatic vessels due to trauma or infection
- C. Venous insufficiency, causing overload of lymphatic vessels
- D. Congenital malformation of lymphatics



Visit our website to learn more about lymphedema and how to support this bill.
LymphedemaTreatmentAct.org

*Journal of Clinical Oncology - JCO Clin Oncol. 2009; 27(10):286-7

Lymphedema Surveillance Programs

Let us help you monitor your patients for early signs and symptoms of lymphedema. Breast cancer survivors, head and neck cancer survivors, and melanoma survivors are frequently at risk for developing lymphedema if the survivor has had lymph nodes removed or radiated. At Ribbons Physical Therapy, we follow NCCN Version 1.2022 Survivorship guidelines where we take initial base line measurements of the at risk area pre-op/pre-radiation. This allows us to note small changes in the area where change is often not visually observable. Comparing previous measurements as well as monitoring the consistency of the tissue in the at risk area allows for early detection of lymphedema. These patients are followed one month after surgery/radiation and every 3 months for a year, or more frequently if indicated. Initiating treatment early can mean the difference of utilizing a compression garment all the time versus utilizing a compression garment on an as needed basis. Only having to use a compression garment on an as needed basis allows the patient to have a higher quality of life.

90% of all cases are **Secondary** (acquired)^{1,2,4,5}

Secondary cases can be broken into two categories:

22% of all cases are **non-cancer** related. Any significant damage to the lymphatic organ system can result in lymphedema. Causes include:

- Burns
- Ilio-femoral bypass
- Infection
- Paralysis
- Radiation
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Surgery
- Trauma

68% of all cases are **cancer** related. The overall cancer-related incidence rate is **22%**.

Specific rates include:

- Breast 40%
- Sarcoma 30%
- Gynecological 20%
- Melanoma 16%
- Genital-urinary 10%
- Head and neck 4%

1. Journal of the American College of Cardiology. 2008; 52 (10): 799-806
 2. Vascular Medicine. 1998; (3): 145-156
 3. Clinical Genetics. 2010; 77: 438-452
 4. Cancer. 2010; 116: 5138-49
 5. Journal of Clinical Oncology. 2009; 27;(3): 390-7
 6. Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences. 2008; 1131: 147-154
 7. European Journal of Cancer Care. (Engl.) 1996; 5: 56-59

Scan our QR code to see all of our services!





Ribbons PT Expands Care to Include Pelvic Health for Both Women & Men

This quarter the American Cancer Society recognizes several cancers that create deficits in which Ribbons PT can address. Our pelvic health program offers solutions to deficits caused by cervical, anal, and colon cancers.

Patients Our Pelvic Health Program Serves:

Patients with any history of cancer or lymphedema diagnoses who also have pelvic health concerns. Our program is NOT exclusive to gynecological or pelvic region cancer diagnosis.

Common cancer diagnoses that can cause pelvic floor dysfunction:

- Cancer of female reproductive organs
- Colorectal cancer
- Breast cancer due to hormonal therapy
- Prostate cancer


What causes pelvic floor problems in people with abdominal or pelvic cancers?

- Scar tissue that forms after surgery for cancer.
- Surgery can cause tissues or muscles to shift or move.
- Radiation can cause scar tissue, hardening, or shrinking of muscles.
- In some cases, the tumor itself can be affecting the muscles.

Common concerns related to pelvic cancers:

- Radiation-related adhesions
- Urinary incontinence
- Associated urinary or fecal urgency
- Chronic pelvic pain, enteritis, proctitis, cystitis, tenesmus
- Sexual dysfunction, dyspareunia

What treatments are used in pelvic floor therapy?

- Massage of tight muscles
 - Exercises to strengthen your core and pelvic floor muscles, Postural stability
 - Recommend dietary changes
 - Relaxation and deep breathing
 - Maintain continence
- 

Ribbons PT Adds Staff to Meet Demand for Certified Lymphedema Treatment

Ribbons PT welcomes Bethany Clontz, PT, DPT, CLT-ALM to our family. Bethany is a practitioner that truly has a passion for helping people. Her 18 year career started as a volunteer in high school which drove her to pursue her initial starting point as a Physical Therapist Assistant before completing her DPT degree. She received her Certified Lymphedema Therapist credentials in 2021, combining her experience and knowledge with a true need throughout our area. Bethany is now in the process of completing her certification in pelvic health for both women and men. A mother of two, her free time consists of children's soccer, basketball, gymnastics and being active within Bible Baptist Church in Kingsport. She loves reading, crafting, learning, and spending time with her family.

Welcome, Bethany! We're so glad to have you on the team!



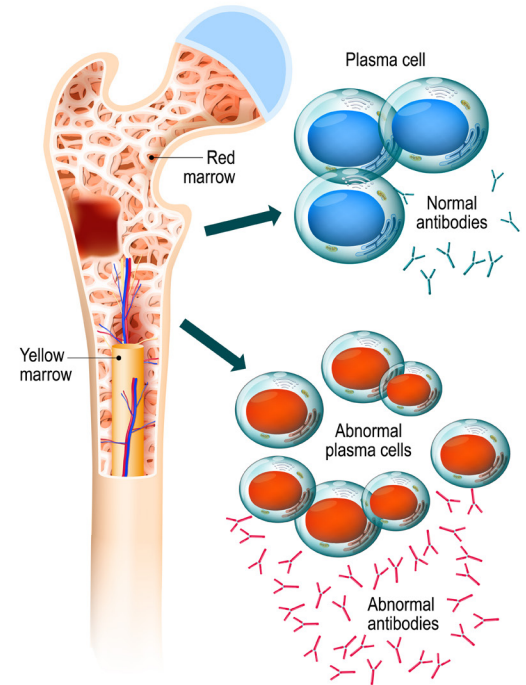
March is Multiple Myeloma Awareness Month

Individuals with multiple myeloma often have long treatments and periods of immobility that contribute to decreased function and physical performance. Multiple myeloma can be treated with chemo agents that have peripheral neuropathy and cardiotoxicity as side effects. Anemia and thrombocytopenia may limit one's ability to exercise or one may not know if it is safe to exercise with abnormal blood counts. Referral to a rehab professional can assist the individual in an individualized exercise program.

At Ribbons Physical Therapy, we can monitor lab values and adjust exercise programs appropriately on a weekly basis for each patient. Low level exercise over the course of receiving chemo can assist in decreasing cardiotoxic effects of chemotherapy. Boney metastasis is always a concern in individuals with multiple myeloma and we can instruct in proper body mechanics and safe exercises to decrease the risk of fractures. If boney metastasis is present, recent research has given specific rehabilitation guidelines to follow so that strengthening can be performed in a safe manner. Strengthening and instruction in proper movement patterns can also decrease pain related to boney metastasis. Stem cell Transplants are a common treatment for multiple myeloma. Although Stem cell Transplants are not performed in this region, individuals are receiving some chemo prior to treatment at the transplant centers and returning home after the transplants. Increasing aerobic capacity and balance training before undergoing stem cell transplants will show a functional improvement during and post-transplant. Stem cell transplant recipients also will benefit from rehab post-transplant to return to pre-transplant functional ability. Studies show that this is best achieved in a supervised exercise setting.

1. Grumeretz S; Wilson, CM. Evaluating the Risk of Pathologic Fracture in Metastatic Bone Disease, Rehabil Oncol. 2021;39(3):E67-E69
2. Paul KL. Rehabilitation and exercise considerations in hematologic malignancies. Am J Phys Med Rehabil. 2011;90(5 Suppl 1):S88-S94. doi:10.1097/PHM.0b013e31820be055
3. Bergenthal N, Will A, Streckmann F, et al. Aerobic physical exercise for adult patients with haematological malignancies. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2014;(11):CD009075. Published 2014 Nov 11. doi:10.1002/14651858.CD009075.pub2
4. Wolin KY, Ruiz JR, Tuchman H, Lucia A. Exercise in adult and pediatric hematological cancer survivors: an intervention review. Leukemia. 2010;24(6):1113-1120. doi:10.1038/leu.2010.54

MULTIPLE MYELOMA



Ribbons PT Addresses the Need for Care Closer to Home, by Opening a New Location in Johnson City!



300 Clinchfield St, Ste 320 | Kingsport, TN
UNDER THE WATER TOWER AT FOOD CITY DOWNTOWN



508 Princeton Rd, Ste 305 | Johnson City, TN
ACROSS FROM EVERGREEN NURSERY

In addition to our original location in downtown Kingsport, to help meet the needs of patients in our communities, Ribbons Physical Therapy has opened a second location to help reduce travel times and give patients an opportunity to schedule other appointments while they are in the area. Our new Johnson City location is on Princeton Road, across the street from Evergreen Nursery and only 4.4 miles from Johnson City Medical Center. We invite you to check out our newest location at 508 Princeton Road, Suite 305.

Make sure to check out our new location map on the back!

Empowering patients to live life to the fullest!

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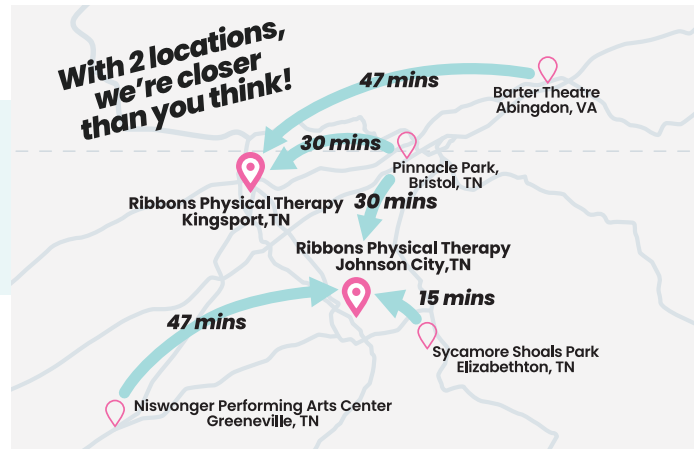


Sign up to receive future newsletters electronically!

How can we help your patients?

- Call to schedule an in-service to help you identify patients with the potential for developing lymphedema who need to be screened or treated by our Certified Lymphedema Therapists. Refer patients to our lymphedema monitoring program that follows NCCN 1.2022 Survivorship guidelines starting pre-op/pre-radiation to establish baseline assessment and measurements, followed up one month after surgery/treatment, then quarterly for a year.
- For patients suffering chemo induced peripheral neuropathy due to Taxane or platinum based treatment, we offer cold laser therapy. This procedure is highly effective in reducing deficits in patients during their chemotherapy regimen as well as long term post-treatment sufferers.
- Patients who are experiencing cognitive deficits from chemotherapy or radiation therapy can benefit greatly by participating in our cognitive/memory clinic. We utilize standardized testing methods tailored specifically for the cancer.
- Do you want our lymphedema or cancer rehabilitation rack cards in your clinic to help patients understand why you are recommending us for treatment? If you have navigators, do you want patient handouts explaining our monitoring program and why you're sending them to us?

Give us a call (423) 251-4742 or office@ribbonspt.com



Check out our new map!

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Empowering patients to live life to the fullest!