

# LYMPHOEDEMA ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

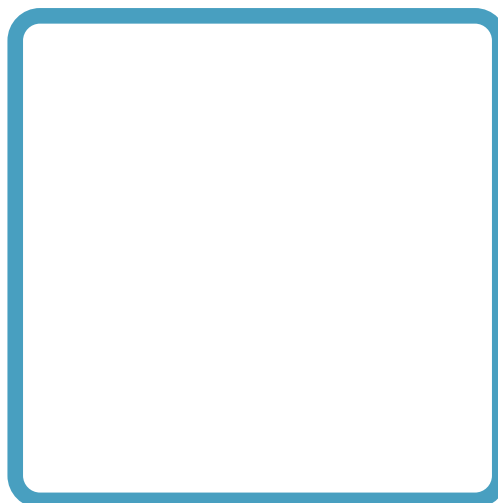
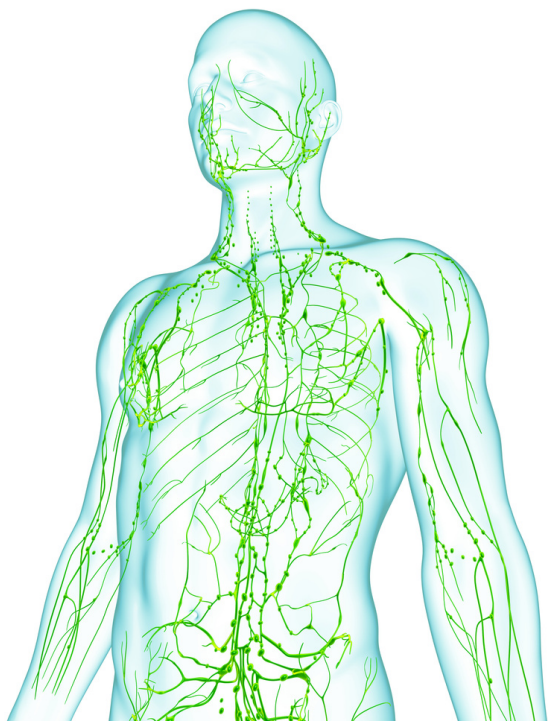
NPO 164 - 391

## VISION

Lymphoedema Care for All

## MISSION

To be a collaborative association which strives to promote quality Lymphoedema management, education, awareness and research in South Africa



## Contact Us

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[info@laosa.co.za](mailto:info@laosa.co.za)

[www.laosa.co.za](http://www.laosa.co.za)

## USEFUL WEBSITES:

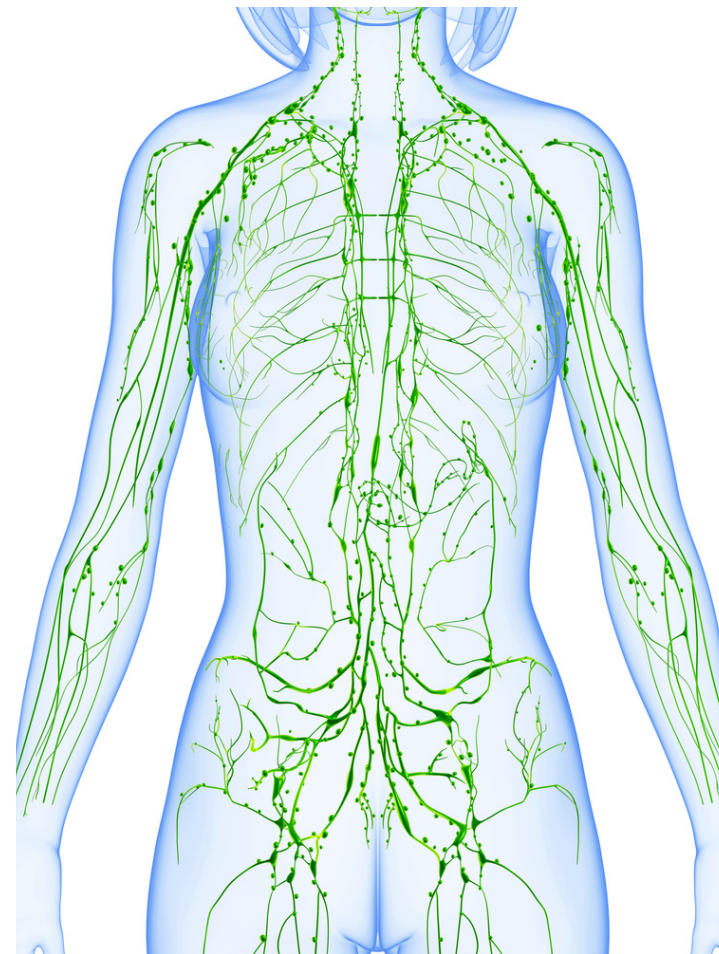
[www.lymphoedema.org](http://www.lymphoedema.org)

[www.lympho.org](http://www.lympho.org)

[www.lymphnet.org](http://www.lymphnet.org)

# A Guide to Lymphoedema

[www.laosa.co.za](http://www.laosa.co.za)



**LAOSA**  
Lymphoedema Association  
of South Africa



# WHAT IS LYMPHOEDEMA:

Lymphoedema is an abnormal, long term swelling of part or parts of the body caused by a collection of lymphatic fluid in the tissues below the skin. It occurs when there is a dysfunction in the lymphatic system.

## PRIMARY LYMPHOEDEMA

This happens when lymphatic vessels or nodes have not developed correctly before birth. It may present at birth, but can also become evident later in life.

## SECONDARY LYMPHOEDEMA

Secondary Lymphoedema happens as a result of damage or obstruction to the lymphatic system causing an inability for the lymphatic system to transport fluid. This damage can be caused by surgery, trauma, cancer or treatment of cancer or infection.



## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS:

1. Full or heavy sensation in the body part at risk.
2. Painless or painful swelling
3. Tightness in the skin
4. Difficulty wearing clothes, tight jewelry
5. Longstanding swelling that causes skin changes - tissue becomes thick and hard

The recommended treatment is best executed by a certified and knowledgeable Lymphoedema therapist. Visit the 'find a therapist' section on the LAOSA website to find a therapist near you.

## RISK REDUCTION ADVICE:

1. SKINCARE: Prevent sunburn, insect bites and look after your nails. Keep you skin well moisturised.
2. ACTIVITY/LIFESTYLE: Build up exercise intensity gradually and try to maintain a healthy weight.
3. LIMB CONSTRICTION: Avoid blood pressure being taken on at risk side. Make sure clothes and jewelry are not too tight.
4. BODY TEMPERATURE: Extremes of temperature can overload the lymphatic system.
5. TRAVEL: Speak to your therapist about wearing well fitted compression when travelling.
6. INFECTIONS: Redness, heat or a rash in the at risk area, may indicate infection.
7. TRAUMA: Cuts and open areas in skin should be cleaned and well managed.
8. SKIN PUNCTURE: Avoid medical/traditional procedures that require needle punctures on the at risk area.