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# Preparing for Summer with Lymphedema: Tips for Managing Symptoms in the Heat

## Introduction

As summer approaches, individuals living with lymphedema face unique challenges. The heat and humidity can exacerbate symptoms such as swelling and discomfort. However, with the right strategies, you can manage these symptoms effectively and enjoy your summer. Here are some essential tips to help you prepare for the warmer months if you have lymphedema.

## Stay Cool

Heat can increase blood flow and lead to more swelling, so keeping your body cool is crucial. Stay indoors during the hottest parts of the day, and use fans or air conditioning to maintain a comfortable environment. When outside, seek shade whenever possible and consider carrying a portable fan.

## **Wear Appropriate Clothing**

Loose, breathable clothing can help manage body temperature and prevent further irritation. Fabrics like cotton are ideal as they allow your skin to breathe. Avoid tight clothing and restrictive accessories, especially around areas affected by lymphedema. Additionally, wearing a compression garment as prescribed by your healthcare provider can help manage swelling.

## **Maintain Hydration**

Dehydration can worsen lymphedema symptoms. Make sure to drink plenty of fluids throughout the day to keep hydrated. Water is the best choice; however, if you sweat excessively, consider beverages that also replace electrolytes.

## **Practice Good Skin Care**

Summer can be harsh on your skin. Keep your skin moisturized to prevent cracking and infection, which can exacerbate lymphedema symptoms. Use a hypoallergenic lotion and apply it daily. Additionally, be diligent about sunscreen application to protect against sunburn, another potential trigger for swelling.

## **Engage in Appropriate Exercise**

Physical activity can help manage lymphedema by promoting fluid circulation. Engage in low-impact exercises like swimming, which helps with lymphatic flow and keeps you cool. Before starting any new exercise regimen, please consult your healthcare provider to ensure it's safe for your condition.

## **Monitor Your Condition**

Check regularly for any changes in your symptoms, such as increased swelling or pain, and report them to your healthcare provider. A symptom diary can help you and your healthcare provider understand how your body reacts to different activities and conditions.

## **Plan Ahead for Travel**

If you're traveling this summer, planning is key. Bring all necessary medical supplies, such as compression garments and skincare products. Consider the logistics of travel and how they might impact your lymphedema, such as sitting for long periods during flights or car rides.

## **Educate Yourself and Others**

Understanding your condition and educating those around you can make managing lymphedema easier. Know how to respond to potential complications and inform others who may need to assist you in case of an emergency.

## **Conclusion**

Living with lymphedema in the summer requires careful management, but it doesn't have to restrict your enjoyment of the season. By implementing these strategies, you can better manage your symptoms and make the most of the warmer months ahead. Remember, every individual's situation is unique, so tailor these suggestions to fit your specific needs and always consult your healthcare provider when making changes to your management plan.



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