

January 11, 2023

## **SRMC Now Offers Lymphedema Therapy**

Salem Regional Medical Center's (SRMC) Rehabilitation staff is now offering specialized outpatient services to help relieve the symptoms of lymphedema and keep it from progressing.

### **What is Lymphedema?**

People with lymphedema experience chronic swelling resulting from a build-up of fluid in the body's tissues due to a blockage in the lymphatic system. This condition may be caused by removal of the lymph nodes, which can change the way that lymph fluid flows to a particular part of the body.

Lymphedema can occur after different types of surgery or cancer treatment; such as mastectomy, lumpectomy, cancer surgery or radiation therapy to a lymph node region.

It may also be caused by an accident or injury; or other conditions, such as chronic venous insufficiency, phlebolymphostatic edema or lipedema.



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### **Treatments Available at SRMC**

"The Lymphedema Program at SRMC is designed to help patients increase their strength, range of motion and flexibility; decrease their pain and swelling; restore their overall function; and improve their quality of life," explained Brian Rafferty, PT, SRMC's Director of Rehabilitation Services.

SRMC's highly-skilled Rehabilitation staff is certified in Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT), which is the gold standard of care and means that they have advanced training in the latest treatment techniques.

According to Rafferty, CDT for lymphedema may include:

- ▶ **Manual Lymph Drainage:** Gentle massage or manipulation of soft tissue to reroute and remove fluid.
- ▶ **Compression Therapy:** Use of multiple layers of bandages on a limb to help move fluid out of a limb.

- ▶ **Individualized Exercise:** Range of motion exercises to help pump fluid out of the affected area and increase strength and flexibility of the limb.
- ▶ **Wound and Skin Care:** Proper skin care to reduce the risk of wounds or infections.
- ▶ **Patient Self-Management:** Individualized care and treatment plans to teach self-manual lymphatic drainage and home exercise.

SRMC's lymphedema services require a physician's referral before therapy can begin, so patients should contact their healthcare provider to get started. Most insurance plans cover the cost of treatment.

To learn more, call SRMC Rehabilitation Services at 330-332-7297.