

"Klose Consulting and Circaid sponsored an advanced lymphedema conference in Minneapolis in May 2008. The foremost lymphologist in the world, Dr Prof Ethel Foeldi, come to speak and provide assistance with difficult cases presented by attendees. She answered some questions about controversial issues such as wearing sleeves when flying, and when to start lymph drainage or compression after an infection or a blood clot. There were about 150 attendees including Physical and Occupational Therapists, nurses and physicians and massage therapists, all of whom were certified lymphedema therapists. Dr Charles McGarvey presented information about a recent study out of NIH

The NIH study showed that women at risk for post BrCA lymphedema who had complaints of fullness and heaviness were considered to have sub-clinical lymphedema. The study showed that in the presence of fullness and heaviness, wearing a correctly fitted sleeve and glove only during the day for only two weeks reversed the swelling. Furthermore, discussion led to the idea that the sleeve and glove should also be removed when very inactive i.e. at the movies or watching TV, napping or sleeping at night. The general consensus was that this represents sub-clinical lymphedema, meaning it can't be easily measured or seen, but with the idea of early detection and treatment, it is thought that this regimen would prevent or slow the possible progression.

If anyone wants to wear a sleeve and glove they need to be properly fitted. I can measure people but they would need a prescription for PT from any of their MDs. (I am always available for questions) Measuring can also be done by a number of fitters - Women's Health Boutique at St Vincents on Naab Rd, the same kind of place at community north, though they said they have less experience, Central Brace and Limb, Advanced Orthopro, Tucker Pharmacy, Dr Aziz Pharmacy - are ones that I know of. As far as I know only the one on Naab Rd will bill insurance. It is also possible to search "lymphedema sleeves" on Google or Yahoo to find sellers and there are quite a few. I don't want to appear to endorse any particular ones, but can discuss with individuals as needed.

The recommendation is for Compression Class 1 sleeve and glove, which is 20 - 30 mm Hg. The sleeve can go from wrist to armpit, doesn't need a shoulder strap. Can have silicon dots at upper border to keep it up. There is also a body adhesive to keep it up if you want. Glove can include fingers or just to knuckles with a thumb piece. Glove must be same compression as sleeve. The cheap Jobst glove doesn't work well, nor will ones through catalogs that are not specifically designed for lymphedema. If anyone has questions, please call me and leave a message or email me here and I will answer as soon as I can.

For those paddlers who are already wearing compression there is something new for paddling (and the rest of the time too). Juzo now makes sleeves and gloves in all the same off the shelf sizes, with silver thread woven in. They can make custom sizes also. The advantages are silver makes them antimicrobial and anti odor - useful paddling at Geist when the water is less nice. And what I really liked is that silver thread cools you off. As long as the temperature of the air is less than 98 degrees, body temperature, the silver will cool your skin. They are going to find out the SPF of the silver garments, but it will be high, for sure.

It is also OK to wear a glove without a sleeve, but I don't recommend a sleeve without a glove unless you have already worked with a therapist.

There were lots of new nighttime options on the market for those already being treated for lymphedema, mostly to replace bandaging (yay).

The general consensus of opinion from all those experts was don't wear a prophylactic compression sleeve to fly if you don't have any swelling. There just isn't any evidence to support wearing prophylactic garments, and some people think it might cause lymphedema to wear a prophylactic garment when flying. If you already have edema, bandages or one of the other options are considered better than sleeve/glove when flying, if possible.

If anyone has specific questions, please encourage them to contact me. The conference was very enlightening, and ideas have changed a lot in the last 12 years since the first National Lymphedema Conference. This conference was run by a different group, because all attendees had to have certification already.

Be well paddlers,
Barbara

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