



Lymphedema Awareness Month Focus Of March Lymphedema Education Meeting

by Randy Schorfheide

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ALTON – March, among other observances, is recognized as Lymphedema Awareness Month, and learning more about and promoting awareness of Lymphedema will be the focus at the March Lymphedema Education Meeting in Alton – sponsored by OSF Rehabilitation Services.



Riverbend region residents are invited to join the OSF Lymphedema Therapy team for this free educational session about Lymphedema and meet other people with Lymphedema.

The March Lymphedema education meeting will be held:

- **Thursday, March 7, 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.**
- OSF HealthCare Rehabilitation Services
- 228 Alton Square Mall, Alton, IL (Enter the Rehab office from the upper Mall parking lot, facing Alby Street, under the "OSF HEALTHCARE" sign.)

Interested individuals should direct questions or requests for additional information to OSF Rehabilitation Services at (618) 463-5171.

Lymphedema refers to tissue swelling caused by an accumulation of fluid that is usually drained by the body's lymphatic system. Some Lymphedema facts include:

- It most commonly affects the arms or legs, but it can also occur in the face, neck, or trunk.
- Any type of problem that blocks the drainage of lymph fluid can cause lymphedema.
- There is no cure for lymphedema, but it can be managed with physical or occupational therapy.
- Treatment may include manual lymphatic drainage, compression bandaging, compression garments, and exercises.

What are some initial tips that someone living with a Lymphedema diagnosis can use in their day-to-day life?

1. **Learn all you can about lymphedema.** Knowing what lymphedema is and what causes it can help communication with the doctor or physical therapist.
1. **Take care of your affected limb(s).** Clean your skin daily, looking over every inch, looking for signs of trouble, such as cracks or cuts. Apply lotion to prevent dry skin.
1. **Take care of your whole body.** Eat a diet rich in fruits and vegetables. Exercise daily. Reduce stress. Try to get enough sleep. Do what you can to maintain a healthy weight.
1. **Get support from others with lymphedema.** Whether you attend Lymphedema Education meetings at OSF Rehabilitation Services (*the first Thursday each month from 1:00 to 2:00 pm*), or participate in online interest groups, it helps to talk to people facing similar challenges.