Lymphedema

Clinical summary of the ONS Guidelines™ for cancer treatment–related lymphedema

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Secondary (acquired) lymphedema is a chronic condition lacking a known cure that most commonly results from cancer treatment, particularly for breast, gynecologic, prostate, and head and neck cancers; lymphoma; and melanoma, and affects an estimated 1 in 1,000 Americans. Lymphedema is characterized by an accumulation of protein-rich lymphatic fluid in the affected part of the body. It can potentially affect functioning, family roles and relationships, occupational roles, and productivity. The majority of strategies to prevent and manage lymphedema are nonpharmacologic, used alone or in combination with one another.

KEYWORDS
lymphedema; evidence-based practice; exercise; prospective surveillance

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