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The Role and Importance of Manual Lymph Drainage in Wound Care

The lymphatic system is essential in our bodies, filtering and removing waste, toxins, and other unwanted materials from our tissues. When this system functions correctly, it helps maintain fluid balance, immune function, and overall health. However, the lymphatic system might become compromised in some situations, such as injuries, surgery, or certain health conditions. This is where Manual Lymph Drainage (MLD) comes into play, particularly in wound care.

Manual Lymph Drainage is a gentle manual therapy technique that promotes the natural drainage of lymph from the body tissues back toward the heart. This therapeutic technique was first developed in the 1930s by Dr. Emil Vodder. It is designed to stimulate the movement of lymph fluid, often assisting in reducing swelling and accelerating healing.

In wound care, the importance of MLD becomes particularly evident.

First and foremost, MLD can help to reduce edema (swelling caused by excess fluid) surrounding a wound. The application of MLD can facilitate the rerouting of fluid from congested areas to other areas with more normal lymphatic functioning. Doing so alleviates the pressure on the wound, minimizes discomfort, and helps create a more conducive environment for healing.

Secondly, MLD promotes faster healing by enhancing the delivery of nutrients to the wound site. Improving the circulation of lymph fluid ensures that critical nutrients reach the cells involved in the healing process. Notably, this becomes crucial when the wound is slow to heal or in chronic conditions like venous ulcers or diabetic wounds.

Moreover, by clearing out excess toxins and waste, MLD contributes to a cleaner wound environment. In wound healing, debris from dead cells and bacteria may accumulate and impede progress. MLD can help remove this buildup, lowering the risk of infection and other complications.

MLD also aids in scar tissue management. Regular lymph drainage around a healing wound can prevent or minimize the formation of hard, restrictive scar tissue. It does so by improving circulation and reducing inflammation, which, in turn, can deter excessive collagen production - a leading contributor to thick scar tissue.

To sum up, Manual Lymph Drainage is a significant adjunctive therapy in wound care. Its ability to improve lymphatic circulation, decrease swelling, expedite healing, and manage scar tissue makes it a valuable tool for clinicians. However, it's essential to remember that trained practitioners should perform MLD to ensure safety and efficacy. If you or a loved one are considering MLD for wound care, discussing it with your healthcare provider first is recommended to understand if it's the right choice for your specific situation.



Taking the ACOLS Complete Lymphedema Certification Course?

The Complete Lymphedema Certification Course is an intensive 135-hour certification training for medical professionals to successfully treat and manage lymphedema affecting different parts of the body, as well as other related conditions.

Each course participant will be trained in the four components of Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT) and the management of lymphedema affecting a variety of peripheral body parts - upper and lower extremities, head and neck, exterior genitalia, truncal swelling,

pediatric lymphedema, post-surgical and post-traumatic swelling, lymphedema caused by chronic venous insufficiencies and other pathologies, lipedema and more. Upon completion of this course participants will be able to differentiate between a variety of peripheral edemas and understand the medical indications and contraindications of CDT. Furthermore the therapist will be able to establish a treatment plan for individuals with chronic extremity lymphedema and other conditions and perform the treatment accordingly. Class topics include the following:

- Anatomy, physiology and pathology of the lymphatic system
- Basic and advanced techniques of MLD and CDT
- Treatment of primary and secondary lymphedema as well as related conditions
- Introduction to the treatment of pediatric lymphedema, head/neck and genital lymphedema
- Lymphedema bandaging techniques for upper and lower extremities
- Decongestive exercises for lymphedema patients
- Measuring techniques for edema (volumetric and circumferential)
- Measuring techniques for compression garments (with certification) - JUZO, Solaris
- Home maintenance and self-treatment for lymphedema patients
- Hygienic skin and nail care for lymphedema
- Indications and contraindications for MLD and CDT
- Billing issues for lymphedema therapy

Students will first complete a 45-hour Home Study Program, followed by the 90-hour class for their live lecture and hands-on instruction. The classroom time is taught over 9 consecutive days. It requires only 5 working days and 2 weekends to complete.

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