

# Operative intervention in a lymphedematous limb

Sometimes an operation is indicated in a patient with lymphedema. Precautions should be considered especially when a operation is performed on a lymphedematous limb, even for conditions which are not directly related to the lymphedema (e.g. varicose veins, hydrocele).



### WHAT IS RECOMMENDED

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- Discuss the risks and benefits with the centre of expertise responsible for the patient.
- Consider consultation with a specialist in lymphatic diseases prior to non-lymphatic surgery.
- Choose the direction of the incision to minimize the damage to the lymph vessels (e.g. hydrocele operation by a midline scrotal incision instead of a groin incision).
- Post-operatively, ensure proper compression treatment with bandages if there is a hematoma or extra swelling.
- If there is no extra swelling, continue wearing compression garments.
- A team of specialists in lymphatic diseases should perform surgery for lymphedema.
- Measure the swelling/volume /circumference pre-and post-operatively.



### WHAT YOU SHOULD NOT DO

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- Discontinue the routine lymphedema treatment (e.g. compression garments) when the patient undergoes surgery.
- In general, operations for lymphedema are not indicated for patients under the age of 18 years.