

Complex Decongestive Therapy (CDT) and Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD)



Complete decongestive therapy (CDT), also called complex decongestive therapy, is an intensive program that combines many of the different treatment approaches including bandaging, compression garments, manual lymphatic drainage, exercise, and self-care¹

CDT is considered the gold standard of treatment for lymphoedema that has progressed beyond stage 1 - meaning there is visible swelling without pitting (a temporary indentation forms on the skin when pressed) and there may be evidence of fibrosis (scarring of soft tissue).¹

MLD is an advanced therapy which requires a specialist therapist to apply a range of specialised and gentle techniques to move the skin in the direction of the lymph flow. This stimulates the vessels carrying the lymph.²

THE TREATMENT WOULD INCLUDE ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Skin care
- External support or compression in the form of elastic compression garments
- A programme of exercise and movement. Hydrotherapy is particularly beneficial for reducing the swelling.
- Self-lymphatic drainage. This can be taught by the MLD therapist
- Complex Decongestive Therapy (CDT). This includes manual lymphatic drainage, multi-layer bandaging and intermittent sequential pneumatic compression therapy

AT PARKSIDE HOSPITAL WE USE IT FOR:

- MLD is one of the corner stones of the CDT programme for the management of Lymphoedema here at Parkside Hospital, alongside with multilayer lymphoedema bandaging, exercises, hydrotherapy and education of the patient
- It is the primary tool for the management of primary and secondary lymphoedema. We treat lymphoedema following breast surgery and we have also found it to be very beneficial to help reduce the swelling resulting from joint replacement surgery and lower limb trauma.

If you would like more information or would like to refer a patient for CDT then please contact the physiotherapy department at Parkside Hospital either by e-mail: physio@parkside-hospital.co.uk or by phone: **0208 971 8000 ext 8640**

REFERENCES:

1. www.breastcancer.org/treatment/lymphedema/treatments/cdt
2. www.mlduk.org.uk/therapy