Wrapping the Arm to Control Lymphedema

These step-by-step instructions were created for you to use as a guide on how to wrap your arm. This wrapping method, to control swelling caused by lymphedema, is called multi-layer, low stretch bandaging. A physical therapist will teach you how to wrap your arm.

Physical Therapist: _________________________________________

Phone Number: ___________________________________________

Materials you will need:

_______________________                     _______________________

_______________________                     _______________________

Here are basic guidelines:

• All bandages should be wrapped just tight enough to stay in place. Do not “tug” on the bandages or stretch them while wrapping.

• Wrapping the bandages too tight can cause pain, numbness, tingling or a cold feeling in your hand or fingers. Take the bandages off if you have pain, a loss of feeling or tingling, or if your hand or fingers feel cold. Do not re-wrap your arm until after the pain, loss of feeling or tingling is gone or your hands and fingers are no longer cold.

• Bandages should be held in place with tape, not metal clips. Do not put tape on your skin. It is important to protect your skin from irritation and scratches.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

Instructions for wrapping

Bandaging your fingers:

- Use the small white bandage first.
- Unroll the bandage.
- Wrap the bandage around your wrist to secure it into place.
- Start with wrapping your thumb. Wrap in a diagonal pattern to the nail bed and back down to the base of your thumb.
- Wrap the bandage around the palm of your hand.
- Wrap your little finger using the same pattern used to wrap your thumb.
- Wrap the bandage around the last 3 uncovered fingers. Wrap the fingers in any order using the same pattern.
- Wrap around the palm of your hand and between each finger. This will help hold the bandage in place.
- Wrap the rest of the bandage around the palm of your hand and fasten with tape.
**Bandaging your arm:**

- Pull on the stockinette to cover your arm.

- Use the non-woven padding to wrap your arm. Start at your wrist and wrap all the way up to your shoulder.

- Use the two brown bandages to cover the padding.

- Use the smaller bandage first. The bandage should be just tight enough to stay in place. No gaps should show between the bandage layers.

- Anchor the small bandage on your wrist.

- Wrap the bandage with your thumb out. Wrap 1 to 2 times around your hand. This will make it easier for you to move your hand. Wrap the bandage to cover the knuckles.

- Wrap the bandage going up the arm until the bandage ends.

- Next, use the larger brown bandage. Wrap it in the opposite direction of the first bandage.

- Wrap the second bandage overlapping by about 1/2 the width of the first bandage.

- Change the bandage direction until the whole arm is covered.
Other instructions you may be given:

Sometimes foam may be added to your bandage. The foam may be cut to fit the shape of your arm or small foam chips may be put into a small fabric bag. The physical therapist will let you know if you need to use the foam and how to use it.