

Lipedema

You have been diagnosed with lipedema and you are seeking reliable information, encouragement, and support. Experts from the International Lipoedema Association (ILA)* on lipedema have summarized the most important information to support your journey with lipedema in the best possible way.

What is lipedema?

- The **major symptoms** of lipedema are **disproportional fat distribution** and **pain** in the legs. The fat distribution is **symmetrical** in both legs. In some cases, the upper arms can be involved too.
- The disease is **exclusively present in women**.
- The **vast majority** of women with lipedema **also suffer from obesity**.
- Lipedema might **affect your daily work and social life, your relationships, your self-esteem and your leisure activities**.

What does lipedema NOT do?

- Include fluid in the tissue** of the legs and/or arms (also known as edema).
- Cause lymphedema**.
- Worsen over time**. However, if accompanying obesity is allowed to progress, the lipedema can too.

How to empower yourself treating your lipedema successfully:



It's essential to understand all aspects of your lipedema, including the diagnosis and the treatment.



Stay physically active, as it is beneficial for your health: in reducing pain, improving your feeling of well-being and managing your weight.



A holistic therapeutic approach is important: you will benefit both physically and psychologically from this.



Lipedema benefits from **keeping your weight as stable as possible.** Dieting increases the risk of gaining weight in the long term.



Realistic and achievable expectations and goal setting are important to prevent disappointment and to help you realize the success you achieve.



Provision of appropriate **compression garments** will help for pain relief, to support the soft tissue, and to improve your mobility. Flat knit garments are preferable.



Seek support with regards to psychological issues. Learning to cope with stress and anxiety and increasing your self-esteem is important.



Liposuction can be considered, but only under certain circumstances.

OUR ADVICE

- ✓ **Take the lead** in managing your lipedema.
- ✓ **You are the most important part in this journey.**
- ✓ **It's in your hands** to cope with **the physical and psychological aspects** of your lipedema.

AND AT THE SAME TIME

Know when and where to ask for help and professional support:

a team of skilled healthcare professionals (e.g. physician, lymphedema/lipedema specialist nurse, physiotherapist, dietician, psychologist) will help you on your journey.

*This document has been created by members of ILA: Ad Hendrickx (NL), José Smeenge (NL), Denise Hardy (UK, responsible for English translation) and is based on the International Consensus: https://www.magonlineibrary.com/pb-assets/JOWC/JWC_Consensus_Lipoedema.pdf

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