

Take care of your body

If you're at a healthy weight now, work to stay that way. Good nutrition and safe exercise are very important.

Excess weight can increase the strain on your lymphatic system. It also increases your risk of lymphoedema.

Body mass index (BMI) is a term used to describe the state of your health related to height and weight. Having a BMI over 30 can increase your risk of lymphoedema. A healthy diet and movement are key to reducing your BMI. See the section on exercise for more information and use this website to calculate your BMI:

www.safefoodnet/bmi-calculator

Healthy diet

Reducing protein in your diet will not prevent lymphoedema. Protein is essential for keeping your body healthy and fully functional.

There is no special diet that will control lymphoedema. You should eat a well-balanced diet that includes vegetables and fruit.

You should lower your intake of salt because salt makes your body retain fluid, which can increase your swelling. For more information on healthy eating see links below or consult a dietician.

Healthy eating

<https://www.safefood.net/healthy-eating>

Eating well

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/e15e3-eating-well/>



Keep hydrated

It is important to drink plenty of water to help your body remove impurities. Cutting back on fluids does not reduce your swelling. Instead, the lymph nodes will attract more fluid from other parts of your body and will increase the swelling.

You should reduce your intake of alcohol and drinks with caffeine, such as tea and coffee.

Diuretics — also known as water pills. Avoid diuretics and don't take them unless they have been prescribed by your doctor for another medical condition. Diuretics are not effective in the treatment of lymphoedema.

There are many fad diets and myths about healthy eating and lymphoedema.

If in doubt, talk to your GP or dietician about what's right for you.