LIPEDEMA is a chronic, progressive and painful adipose tissue disorder thought to affect around ten percent of the female population in America. Lipedema, also called lipoedema, was first described by Doctors Allen and Hines of the Mayo Clinic in the 1940’s. Almost 80 years later, the condition is often mistaken for ‘obesity’ based on BMI.
THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LIPEDEMA

1. What is it?
Lipedema is a chronic, progressive and painful fat tissue disorder. You might also see it written as lipoedema or lipodem, as well.

2. When was it discovered?
It was first described by Doctors Allen and Hines of the Mayo Clinic in 1940.

3. When is typical onset?
46% of women with lipedema symptoms said their symptoms started in puberty (Fetzer & Fetzer, 2016.)

4. Where on the body is it noticed?
Typically, it is seen on the butt, thighs and calves at puberty. It can sometimes affect the arms.

5. Is there a cure?
There is no pill or operation that can instantly cure lipedema. It is a condition that needs to managed to reduce severity of symptoms.

6. What are common symptoms?
Pain with pressure, bruise easily, heaviness and/or weakness in legs, fatigue, smooth skin, but "bean bag" like below skin.

7. Is it hereditary?
Many people with lipedema have noticed a familial link, but more research is needed to determine a genetic link.

8. Are there any other symptoms?
Hypomobility, frequently cold body temperature, and some report the skin on their legs is a different temperature from the rest of their body.

9. Is weight loss an effective treatment?
No. Research has found that there is "little support for the notion that diets lead to lasting weight loss or health benefits" (Mann et al., 2007)

10. Is it caused by my eating habits?
No! Having lipedema is not your fault!

LipedemaTreatmentGuide.com
Unfortunately, according to the Lipoedema UK Big Survey, the average age of diagnosis is 44 years old (Fetzer & Fetzer, 2016) and often, a diagnosis is only made after visiting a specialist like a plastic surgeon, dermatologist or vascular surgeon.

These facts set up the perfect storm for our clients. They may have been suffering since childhood with painful fat on the lower body and all too often, advice from her health professionals, well meaning friends and family is just to diet and exercise.

This is where you can make a difference! Self-care practices can help your client to live a healthy and happy life.

As a Certified Lymphedema Therapist, I would love to see Health Coaches be able to confidently and knowledgeably be able to:

✔ Inform clients with lipedema symptoms about the disease
✔ Introduce self-care practices to reduce pain and inflammation, improve lymphatic flow and positively affect psychosocial wellbeing
✔ Compassionately help clients with lipedema to find a movement program that works for them
Effects of **LIPEDEMA**

- **87%** Reported that lipoedema has had a negative effect on their quality of life
- **86%** Reported low self esteem
- **60%** Reported restricted social life
- **60%** Reported feelings of hopelessness
- **47%** Reported feelings of self blame
- **45%** Reported eating disorders

*Lipoedema UK's Big Survey; Fetzer & Fetzer, 2016.*
HERE ARE 5 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR WELLBEING

Treatment Goals for Lipedema

1.) REDUCE PAIN AND INFLAMMATION
Gentle massage act to calm the sympathetic nervous system which reduces nerve pain and sensitivity. Manual lymphatic drainage improves the flow of lymph throughout your body which reduces pain and swelling.

2.) ENHANCE SELF-CARE PRACTICES
Improving the amount and quality of your sleep, reduce the amount of stress in your life, reach out for help and support when needed, increase activities you enjoy, laugh, and take time to attend to your emotions.

3.) MAKE MOBILITY AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PLEASANT
Stop thinking “No pain, no gain.” Let go of using physical activity as a way to change the shape of your body. Start focusing on moving in ways that you enjoy. We weren’t meant to use movement as a way to punish ourselves.

4.) IMPROVE PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLBEING
Seek out a therapist to support you with the effects of weight discrimination, improve your ability to experience distress and emotions without acting on them, increase your social connectedness virtually and in real life, and try meditation.

5.) INTUITIVE EATING
Recognize that dieting doesn’t work long-term or improve your health and that your size doesn’t determine your health. Make peace with food and respect your body’s intuition. Practice eating based on internal cues, not external cues. If this sounds extremely challenging, find and work with a dietitian, therapist, and/or coach on learning how to do this.

LipedemaTreatmentGuide.com
Treatments that may help reduce pain and inflammation include:

- Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD)
- Compression garments
- Dynamic cupping, Deep oscillation and CVAC
- Athletic taping
- Biofeedback and Meditation
- Epsom salt baths
- Supplements

How do we keep our lymphatic fluid flowing to reduce swelling? There are several ways to help the lymphatic system, including:

- Diaphragmatic (belly) breathing
- Exercise and muscle movement - mobilizing the joints of the body, utilizing the “calf pump” by using the calves, and slow, prolonged stretching
- External pressure - immersion in water or wearing bandaging and compression garments
- Utilization of an external compression technique like manual lymphatic drainage, intermittent pneumatic compression therapy, or dry brushing

Self-care practices that can address anxiety, self-love, and confidence, include:

- Storytelling, Journaling and Life drawing
- Acupressure and Aromatherapy
- Spending time in nature
- Nurturing friendship and relationships

**Exercise for clients with lipedema**

Exercise is essential for our clients. Warren Peled & Kappos (2016) state that “low levels of physical exercise are a risk factor for further deterioration of lipedema ... the ultimate goal of therapeutic interventions is improving strength and fitness to enable an active lifestyle, which can help alleviate some symptoms, particularly in more mild cases” (Warren Peled & Kappos, 2016).

**Compassion for our clients**

Just thinking of the word exercise may bring back gym class memories, failed attempts at weight loss, painful workouts and feelings of shame and failure.

How can we be compassionate with our clients and make sure movement and self-care is seen as healthy and enjoyable part of life instead of a punishment or way to lose weight? How can we make a more compassionate environment for people of all sizes?

**Health Coaches focus on the mind as well as the body.**
MEDITATION REDUCES BODY DISSATISFACTION

Learn how self-compassion research can benefit those with fat tissue disorders.

Access the free meditations here:
http://self-compassion.org/guided-self-compassion-meditations-mp3-2/

Meditations on Podcast

COMPASSIONATE BODY SCAN
A guided way to pay attention to body sensations from head to toe and bring a sense of compassion, peace, and gratitude to their body.

AFFECTIONATE BREATHING
Included a body scan, setting an intention to breathe in affection and kindness for theirself and breathe out the same for other’s who might similarly suffering while not judging if your mind wanders.

LOVING-KINDNESS MEDITATION
Bringing attention to a trait that causes you discomfort, allow the feelings then repeat, "May I be safe, May I be peaceful, May I be kind to myself, May I accept myself as I am." with hands over your heart.

The Benefits

INCREASED SELF-COMPASSION
Those who meditated increased self-compassion by 19% compared to those who did not meditate.

WHOLISTIC IMPROVEMENTS
Significant improvements in self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness, and over-identification which decreased body dissatisfaction and body shame.

For more information on living with Lipedema, visit www.LipedemaTreatmentGuide.com!

SOURCE:
P. ALBERTSON, ELLEN & O-HEE, VIRFTH & DILL-SNAGLESDOARD, KAREN. [2014]. SELF-COMPASSION AND BODY DISSATISFACTION IN WOMEN: A RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED Trial OF A BRIEF MEDITATION INTERVENTION.
We can also address the spirit.

Often, the most valuable thing we can say to our clients on that first visit is that they are not crazy and it is not their fault. They will likely have tried and failed to diet away the weight for years if not decades. Exercising may have resulted in changes in their upper body but no fat reduction in their lower body.

Conclusion

Your help and encouragement may delay or prevent the progression of this disease and give your clients years of improved mobility and quality of life. Thanks so much for the work that you do!

MORE RESOURCES

What Are These Medications on Their Health Form? Information on Supplementation


Carrie Myers shares information on how several popular medications can affect clients when they exercise in the ACE article ‘Common Medications and Their Effects on Exercise Response.’ Find it here: https://www.acefitness.org/education-and-resources/professional/certified/may-2018/6992/common-medications-and-their-effects-on-exercise-response

Let me be very clear - I have no expertise in advising clients on supplementation, so I am not recommending these protocols. I am passing on this information so Health Coaches can be informed about the supplements their clients may be using to treat themselves.

Visual Resources for the Health Coach:

Resources:


Health Coaches: Reprint the final page in this guide and give this **FREE Resource Guide** to your lipedema clients - feel free to brand it with your own logo!
"I can't find clothes to wear — I AM DIFFERENT SIZES ON THE TOP AND BOTTOM."

LIPEDEMA RESOURCES

“My family tells me I have my grandmother's legs.”

“I'm tender and I bruise easily on my legs.”

SOUND FAMILIAR? IF SO, YOU MAY HAVE LIPEDEMA.

ONLINE SUPPORT
There are many Facebook groups available to join to find others with lipedema and ask questions, such as - Lipoedema Warriors and Lipedema Sisters USA.

SELF-CARE SUGGESTIONS

FIND A LIPEDEMA PROVIDER
http://lipedemaproject.org/lipedema-lipoedema-lipodem-provider-directory/

READ A BOOK
Lipedema - The disease they call FAT: An overview for clinicians and the Lipedema Treatment Guide

FREE NEWSLETTER
Register for a free lipedema newsletter through LipedemaTreatmentGuide.com

VISIT WWW.LIPEDMATREATMENTGUIDE.COM FOR MORE.