



# INFORMATION ON LIPEDEMA FOR HERBALISTS

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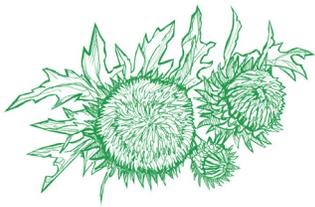
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*I can't seem to lose weight on my legs and bum, no matter what I do.  
I can't find clothes to wear - I am different sizes on the top and bottom.  
My family tells me I have my grandmother's legs.*

”

**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.





## LIPDEMA QUICK FACTS:

- ✓ Not well known in either the western medicine or by the general public.
- ✓ There may be a hormonal component, because symptoms may worsen after puberty, birth control, childbearing and menopause.
- ✓ Excess adipose tissue collects on the lower half of the body except the feet.
- ✓ People with lipedema are pear shaped and the lower body looks much larger than the upper body, almost like the top half of the person doesn't belong on the bottom half.
- ✓ Lipedema can also affect the upper arms and in some cases, everywhere in the body.
- ✓ The skin on the legs may feel smooth or underlying tissue may have a nodular or 'beanbag' like feeling.
- ✓ In more advanced stages, skin may have a texture like an orange peel or a mattress.
- ✓ The skin itself may feel cool to the touch.
- ✓ Areas with lipedema tissue may bruise easily and be tender to the touch.
- ✓ Lipedema adipose tissue can impair one's ability to walk easily and comfortably.
- ✓ A lot of people with lipedema also have hypermobility.
- ✓ Many people with lipedema will have struggled with an eating disorder.

## HOW CAN COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE HELP?

Reich-Schupke, Altmeyer & Stucker (2012) state that the goal of conservative treatments for lipedema are "improvement of the subjective symptoms, prevention of progression of lipedema and prevention of the development of lipolymphedema."

Conservative treatment can help a client with lipedema to:

- ✓ reduce pain and inflammation
- ✓ improve the lymphatic pump
- ✓ affect psychosocial wellbeing
- ✓ guide intuitive eating
- ✓ make mobility and physical activity a pleasant experience
- ✓ improve skin care and protection

For more information, read 'Thick legs - not always lipedema.' JDDG: Journal Der Deutschen Dermatologischen Gesellschaft, at:

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ddg.12024/epdf>



## WHAT EXACTLY IS HAPPENING?

Doctors are not sure, but Dr. Herbst gives a good description of what she thinks is happening in her webpage “Lipedema.” Read it here: <http://www.lipomadoc.org/lipedema.html>

Based on research presented at the 2018 Fat Disorders Resource Society (FDRS) conference, researchers believe that fluid is accumulating in fat tissue because:

- ✔ the tissue is more expandable;
- ✔ there is microvascular damage;
- ✔ there is lymphatic overload, dysfunction and/or lymphatic vessel damage; and
- ✔ the interstitial organ is enlarged.

The blood vessels below the waist are most affected by gravity, so lipedema fat tends to form first in that area of the body.

During my time at the 2018 Lymphedema Therapy Advanced and Review class at the Foldi Clinic in Hinterzarten, Germany I was fortunate to hear Professor Etelka Foldi explain how lipedema is formed. Read her ‘Facts about lipoedema and lymph/lipoedema’ article here : [http://www.woundsinternational.com/media/other-resources/\\_/1070/files/content\\_207.pdf](http://www.woundsinternational.com/media/other-resources/_/1070/files/content_207.pdf) and watch a video of her explaining lipedema and describing the Streeten test here: <https://youtu.be/eVMYrjCfihs>

In the presentation ‘MRI Tools to Diagnose and Evaluate Mechanisms of Lipedema’, Rachelle Crescenzi, PhD, of Vanderbilt University shares her findings that people with lipedema have higher tissue sodium content and fat to water ratio than people without lipedema.

Dr. Stanley Rockson shares his views on lipedema in the video ‘Lipedema is a Mirror Image of Lymphedema’ here: <https://youtu.be/2H0-t27Zdag>





## Resources for Herbalists:

Medicine and Supplements for People with Lipedema and Dercum's Disease (DD)\*. Retrieved from

[http://treat.medicine.arizona.edu/sites/treat.medicine.arizona.edu/files/medicineand-supplements-handout-fdrs-2016\\_without\\_color.pdf](http://treat.medicine.arizona.edu/sites/treat.medicine.arizona.edu/files/medicineand-supplements-handout-fdrs-2016_without_color.pdf)

Lymphedema and lipedema nutrition guide: Foods, vitamins, minerals, and supplements. Ehrlich, C., Iker, E., & Herbst, K. L. (2016). San Francisco, CA: Lymph Notes.

Hillary Hilliard shares that Cleavers (*Galium aparine*), *Calendula officinalis* (Pot Marigold), *Echinacea agustifolia* (Narrow-leaved pale Purple Cornflower), *Astragalus (astragalus membranaceus)*, Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), Wild Indigo Root (*Baptisia tinctoria*) are used to balance lymphatic flow. Read her 'Herbs That Promote Lymphatic Drainage' article here:

<http://herbalismroots.com/herbs-promote-lymphatic-drainage/>

If you treat a client with lipedema, please share your findings. We need Case Studies! Please email [Kathleen Lisson at LipedemaTreatmentGuide@gmail.com](mailto:Kathleen.Lisson@LipedemaTreatmentGuide@gmail.com)

## Resources for Clients with Lipedema

LipedemaTreatmentGuide.com - resources and free newsletter

Jobst handout on Lipoedema [http://lipedemaproject.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/02/2009\\_Jobst\\_Lipoedema.pdf](http://lipedemaproject.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/02/2009_Jobst_Lipoedema.pdf)

Lipedema Provider Directory - <http://lipedemaproject.org/lipedema-lipoedemalipedem-provider-directory/>

[Lipedema - The disease they call FAT: An overview for clinicians.](#) Dayan, E., Kim, J.N., Smith M.L., Seo, C. A., Damstra, R.J., Schmeller, W. Frambach, Y., Carmody, M.A. Foldi, E., & Rockson, S. G. Boston MA: Lipedema Simplified Publications, The Friedman Center for Lymphedema Research and Treatment at The Center for Advanced Medicine at Northwell Health in collaboration with Lymphatic Education & Research Network (LE&RN).

