

Breast Cancer Integrated Care Collaborative: Lymphedema Care & Management

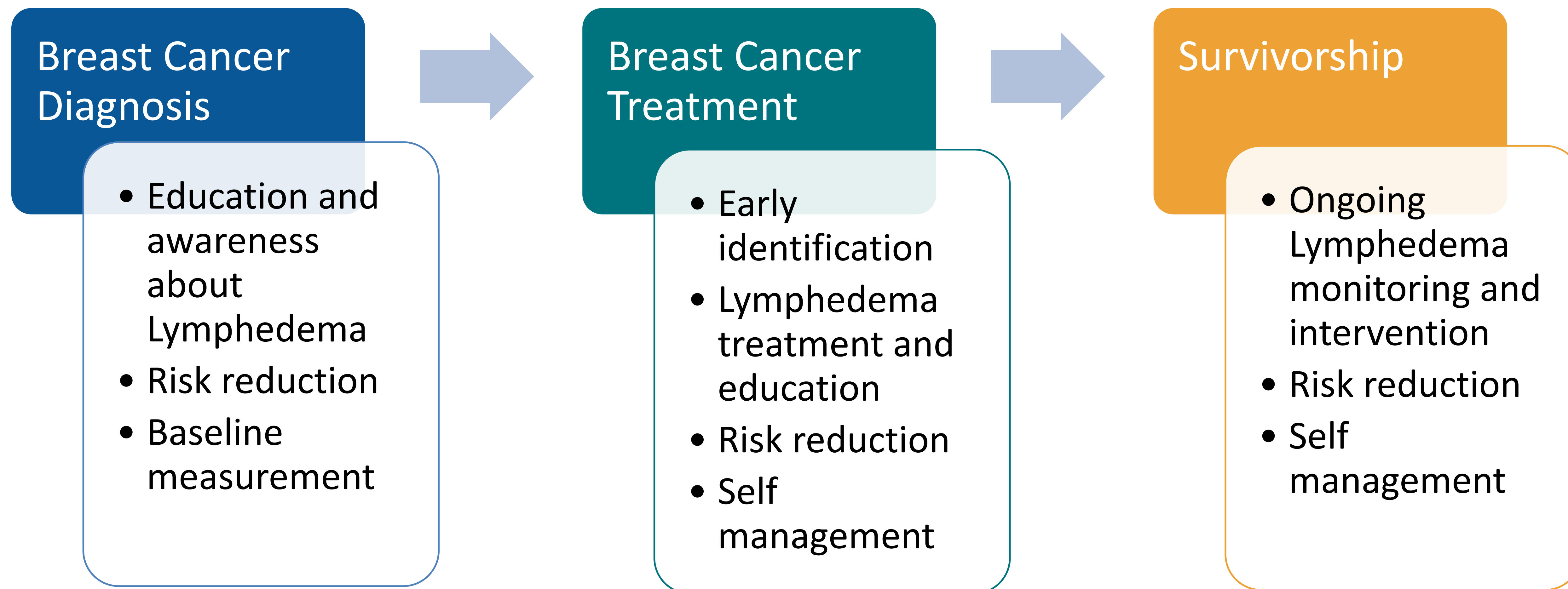
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What is Lymphedema?

A swelling due to abnormal buildup of fluid in body tissues when the *lymphatic system* is improperly developed or damaged through trauma or injury.

Focus

Early identification
Education
Treatment
Self management



Clinic information

- Began May 2013 to address breast cancer related lymphedema (BCRL)
- Operates 1 day/week
- Staffed by Occupational Therapist with CDT training

Incidence

- Sentinel node surgery (SNLD)- 5%
- SNLD and radiation therapy (RT)- 5-14%
- Axillary node surgery (ALND)- 15-20%
- ALND and RT – 33-48%

Risk Factors

- Number of Lymph nodes removed
- Radiation therapy
- Obesity
- Infection
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Increased age

Signs and Symptoms

- An unusual gradual or sudden swelling of affected area
- Feelings of fullness, heaviness in affected area
- Tightness or bursting feeling in skin
- Numb, achy, stiff feeling maybe accompanied by pain
- Increased swelling on hot, humid days or after exertion

Treatment: Complete Decongestive therapy (CDT)

- Manual lymphatic drainage
- Compression therapy
- Skincare
- Exercise
- Education

Risk Reduction

- Avoid needle sticks, injections, blood tests, blood pressure cuff on at risk side
- Avoid sudden heavy lifting and intense repetitive use of the arm at risk
- Practice good skin care
- Improve physical activity and maintain a healthy weight



Early treatment and management helps minimize swelling and reduce complications

If you have had cancer treatment including surgery and radiation affecting lymph nodes you are at a *lifelong risk*



Since May 2013, the clinic has had over 150 visits

Want more information about Lymphedema?
Lymphedema Association of Ontario (LAO)
www.lymphontario.ca