

MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGHS **RESEARCH SUMMARY**

TOPIC: NO MORE PAIN AND SWELLING! PREVENTING LYMPHEDEMA
REPORT: MB #4702

BREAST CANCER: Next to skin cancer, breast cancer is the second most common cancer diagnosed in women in the US. It can occur in men as well, but it is found more often in women. Substantial support for awareness and research has helped advance diagnosing and treatment options. Survival rates have increased, and the number of deaths associated with the disease is declining, largely due to factors like earlier detection. Symptoms may include a breast lump or thickening in an area of tissue, change in shape or size of breast, a newly inverted nipple, and peeling or crusting of skin surrounding nipple. Risk factors include but are not limited to increasing age, a personal or family history of breast conditions or breast cancer, radiation exposure, even obesity and beginning your period at an earlier age. You can make changes in your daily life that may help reduce your risk of breast cancer, such as; self- breast exams, drink alcohol in moderation if at all (limit to one drink a day), exercise most days of the week, limit hormone therapy, maintain a healthy weight and choose a healthy diet.

(Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/breast-cancer/symptoms-causes/syc-20352470>)

LYMPHEDEMA: A lymphatic obstruction or lymphedema is a condition where excess fluid collects in tissues causing swelling. It is incurable, but with the right treatment it can be controlled. In some cases, it can lead to skin infections and lymphangitis; an inflammation of the lymphatic system. Complex decongestive therapy can help treat symptoms, and involves things like remedial exercise, skincare, manual lymphatic drainage, or multilayer bandaging. Secondary lymphedema can be caused as a result of cancer surgery, when surgeons remove lymph nodes to stop the spread of cancer. Radiation therapy can also destroy cancerous tissue but damage nearby healthy tissue as well, such as the lymphatic system.

(Source: <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/180919.php#causes>)

NEW PREVENTION SURGERY: Previously, when breast cancer surgeries would result in lymphatic system injuries, doctors would take measures to treat this post surgery. Now there is a way to prevent it, using supra micro surgical techniques.

“Essentially we find lymphatics that we think potentially are damaged during the breast cancer surgery, no fault to the breast surgeon doing the operation, and then we drain them into the venous system or the veins in the armpit to allow the arm some way to drain this limb. And as long as it can stay open, hopefully they never go on to develop lymphedema.”

Other than adding more time in the operating room, there is no real risk to the patient undergoing this therapy.

(Source: Christopher Reid, MD)

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If this story or any other Ivanhoe story has impacted your life or prompted you or someone you know to seek or change treatments, please let us know by contacting Marjorie Bekaert Thomas at mthomas@ivanhoe.com