

Lipedema – We can do better!

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LIPEDEMA

Lipedema is an incurable, progressive, debilitating fat and connective tissue disorder that affects millions of women in the U.S.A and worldwide. Although the exact prevalence of lipedema is unknown, it is estimated that 11% of women are affected. Lipedema fat is lumpy and painful. It accumulates in large abnormal pockets in the legs, thighs and buttocks, and often in the arms and of the trunk, sparing the hands and the feet. The buildup of fat is not caused by obesity, and diet, exercise or even bariatric surgery has little impact on the condition. Women who suffer from lipedema often develop lymphedema, mobility abnormalities and degenerative joint disease (mostly in the knees) that often requires joint replacements. If left untreated, these women become debilitated, morbidly obese and eventually are unable to carry on simple activities of daily living.



FACT: LIPEDEMA IS A TREATABLE DISEASE

Contrary to the general belief, lipedema, although incurable, can be treated. Conservative treatment can often provide a significant relief of symptoms; diet and supplements aimed to reduce inflammation can improve skin sensitivity; compressions and other methods of decongestion can significantly reduce edema and swelling; pain and tenderness to ordinary pressure can also be addressed conservatively. For the many women who have tried and exhausted the benefits of conservative treatment and continue to have symptoms that interfere with their activities of daily living, surgical removal of the abnormal lipedema fat provides significant and long-lasting symptoms relief. It is done by gentle lymph sparing

techniques, such as water-jet assisted liposuction (WAL). The WAL technique is effective in removal of the abnormal fat while preserving the lymphatics and other subcutaneous delicate structures. WAL is an office procedure and can be done under local anesthesia.



WHY LIPEDEMA POPULATION IS SO UNDERSERVED?

Despite the fact that lipedema affects a significant portion of women, it remains largely unaddressed and untreated because of a three main reasons; the general population is poorly informed about lipedema, most providers know very little about it and reimbursement by medical insurance carriers is very difficult. More specifically, lipedema women often don't know why they have a disproportionately large lower body, why they cannot lose weight despite being on diet and why touching their legs or measuring blood pressure is so painful. On the other hand, the majority of medical providers believe these women are just obese and lazy and offer them nothing but "diet and exercise." Furthermore, most of the providers who know about



lipedema, lack the knowledge it can be treated, and how. Another issue is reimbursement; insurance carriers often consider lipedema as obesity and the medically necessary surgical treatment is considered "cosmetic" and deny coverage.

CAN WE DO BETTER? YES!

By addressing the above three 'players', *patients, providers and carriers*, a triple A (*accessible, advanced and affordable*) treatment of lipedema will become available. The population in general, the concerned women and the medical community should acquire a general knowledge about lipedema, how to diagnose it and be aware it is a treatable disorder. More physicians should be educated about how to treat lipedema, conservatively and surgically. And in order for physicians to afford treating lipedema and for patients to be able to be treated without sacrificing their life savings, insurance carriers should recognize lipedema as a disabling disease and cover its treatment fairly.



LIPEDEMA TREATMENT NETWORK (LTN)

Lipedema Treatment Network (LTN) is a recently founded physician management organization aimed to connect between patients, providers and insurance carriers. LTN is a national network of qualified lipedema physicians that improves patients' access for diagnosis and treatment in their geographical region and assists providers in receiving proper and fair reimbursement. **VTN**