



**Welcome to the 1st  
ever Lymphoedema  
Awareness MONTH  
March 2026**



Accelerate

Transforming wound  
and lymphoedema care

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# Lymphoedema

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**This .....**

Can become this .....

# What is Lymphoedema?

Failure of the lymphatic system which leads to :

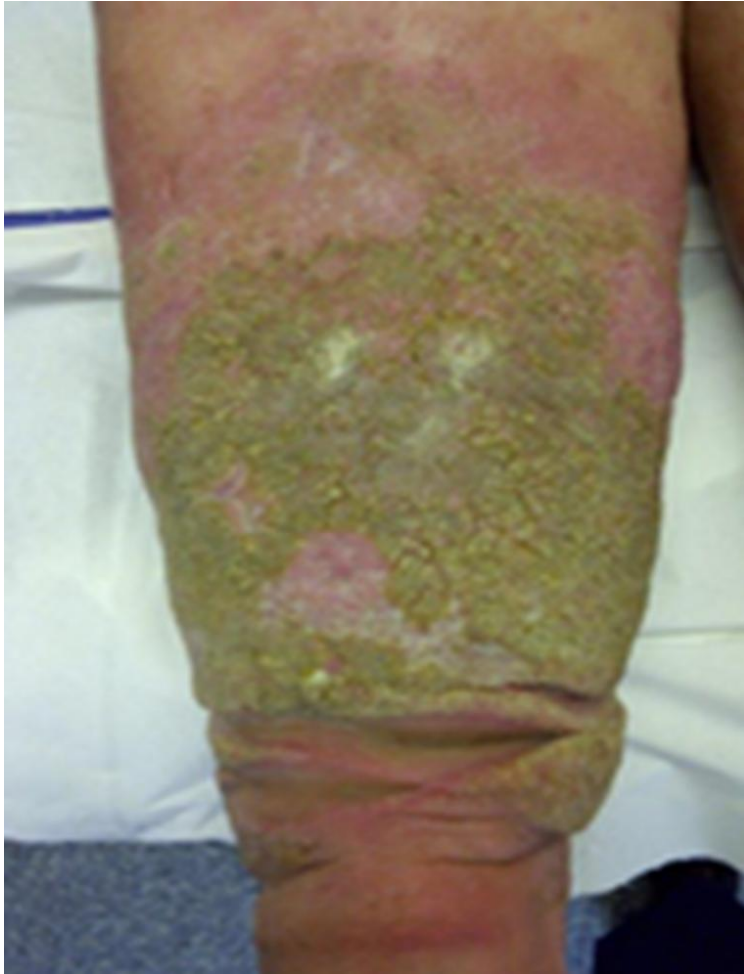
- Swelling that can affect any part of the body
- Skin that looks tight or shiny or has specific changes like brown pigmentation or warty growths
- Affected areas can feel thickened or hard
- Shoes, clothes or jewellery no longer fit
- Often mistaken for “just ageing”, weight gain, or poor circulation
- Wounds or leakage of lymph through the skin can occur
- Increased risk of infection

Over 400, 000 people live with Lymphoedema in the UK .... And that’s just that are known about.



# Hyperkeratosis

# Lymphorrhoea



# Psychosocial

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- Anxiety
- Fear
- Depression
- Loss of control
- Responsible for causing lymphoedema, not good enough
- Increasing social isolation and loneliness
- Poor body image - embarrassment, disfigurement
- Reduced choice in clothing and footwear and self esteem
- Loss of job/role

# Often heard phrases

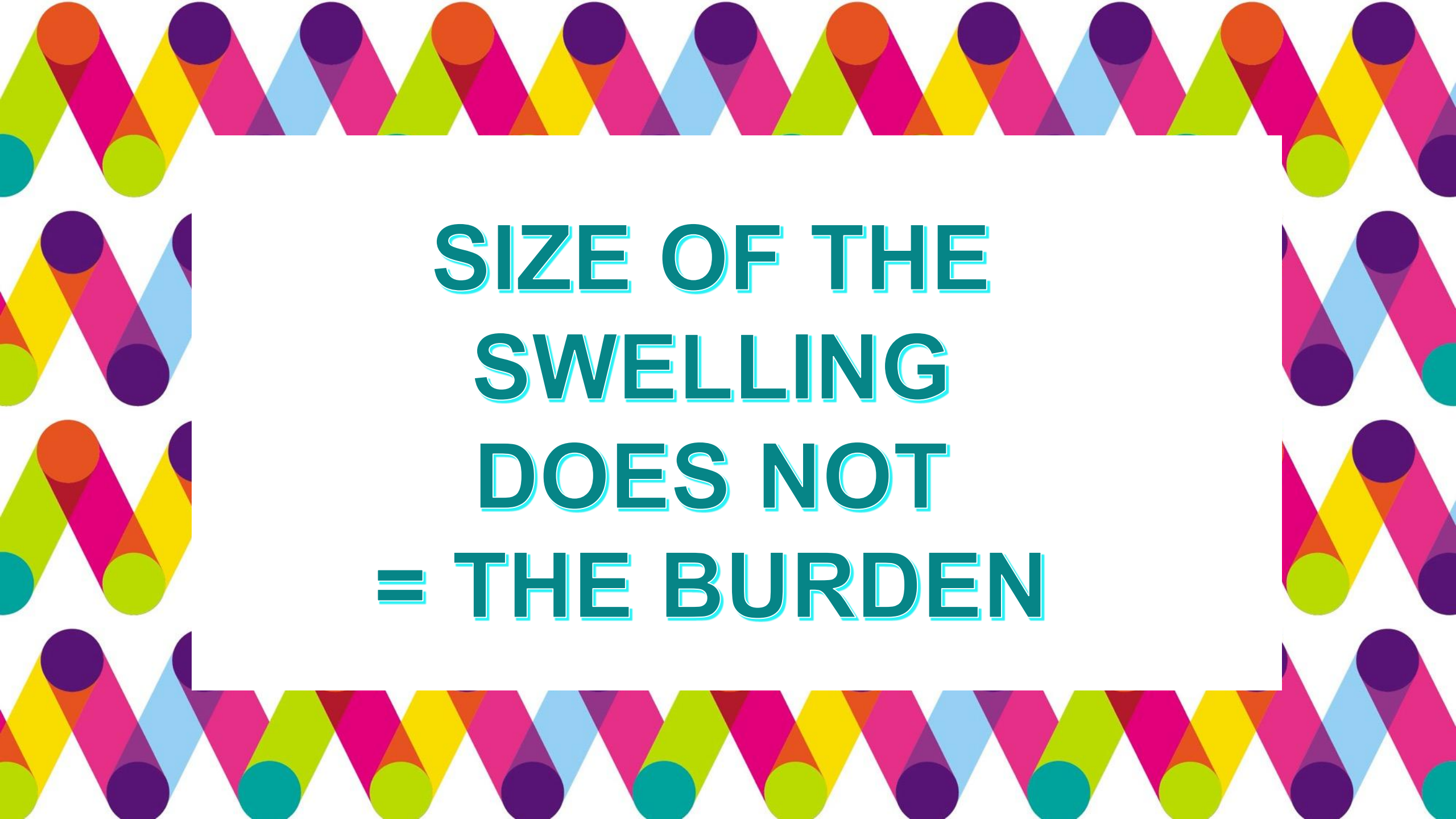
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- My legs are killing me
- I'm in agony
- I'm in constant in pain
- My legs are on fire
- My legs are murder
- Please help me
- No one will listen to me
- I don't know where to put them or what to do with them!

# Physical

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- Reduced mobility - falls risk
- Poor wound healing, risk of skin and tissue changes and skin breakdown, lymphorrhoea
- Inconvenience - expense
- Increased risk of developing cellulitis - hospital admissions
- Increased pain and limb heaviness



**SIZE OF THE  
SWELLING  
DOES NOT  
= THE BURDEN**

# Lymphatic system

CVS

- Fluid balance

Immune

- Production/storage lymphocytes
- Surveillance & response
- Collection / neutralisation harmful particles

Alimentary

- Fats /Vitamins
- Gut health

# Who is at risk?

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Lymphoedema can affect anyone, but risk is higher if you have:

- Had cancer treatment (especially surgery or radiotherapy affecting lymph nodes)
- A history of recurrent infections, wounds or ulcers or skin conditions
- Venous disease or poor circulation
- Obesity
- Limited mobility
- Had surgery, trauma or burns
- A family history (primary lymphoedema)
- Increasing age
- Comorbidities and/or polypharmacy.

# Cancer and lymphoedema

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After cancer treatment:

- Swelling can appear months or years later
- Many people are told to “watch for swelling” but not shown how
- Early signs a 🙌 Early lymphoedema is often manageable and sometimes reversible often subtle and easily missed



# Early signs to watch for

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Early signs include:

- Heaviness or tightness
- Rings, watches or shoes feeling tighter
- Aching or discomfort
- Skin feeling tight or different
- Swelling that comes and goes

# Why early action matters

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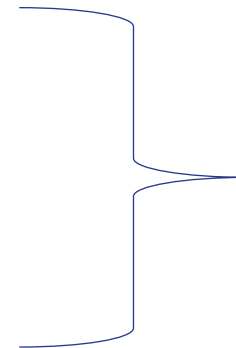
Lymphoedema progresses if untreated

Early stages:

- fluid-based
- easier to manage

Later stages:

- tissue changes
- Increased risk of infections (cellulitis)
- Pain and reduced mobility
- Impact on work, wellbeing and confidence



Harder to treat

# How is lymphoedema managed?

There is no “cure”, but it is manageable

Management may include:

- Education and supported self-care
- Skin care
- Movement and exercise
- Compression (garments or bandaging)
- Emotional support



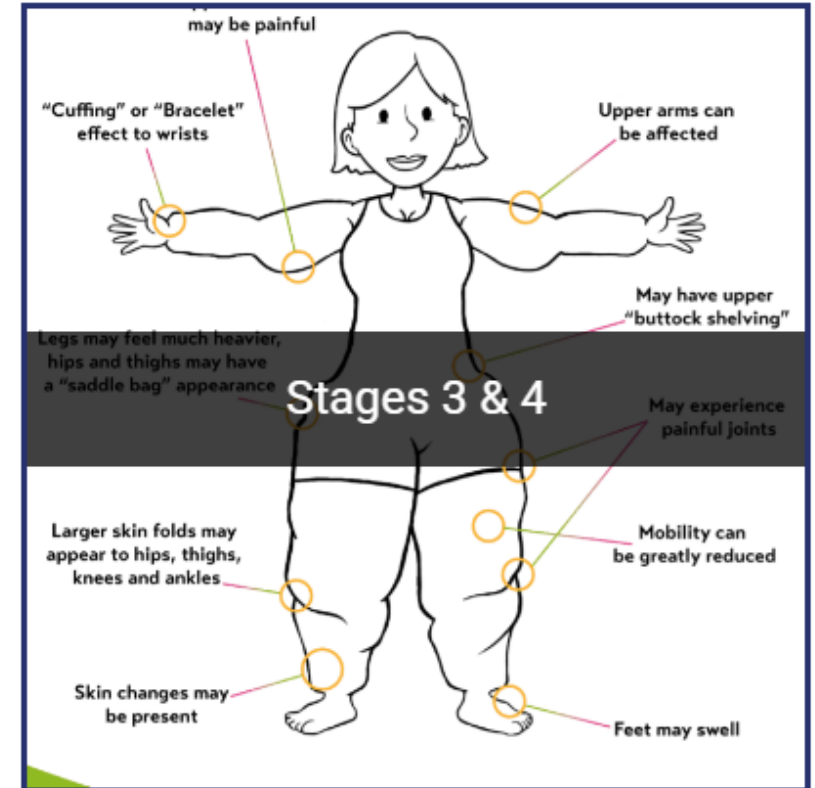
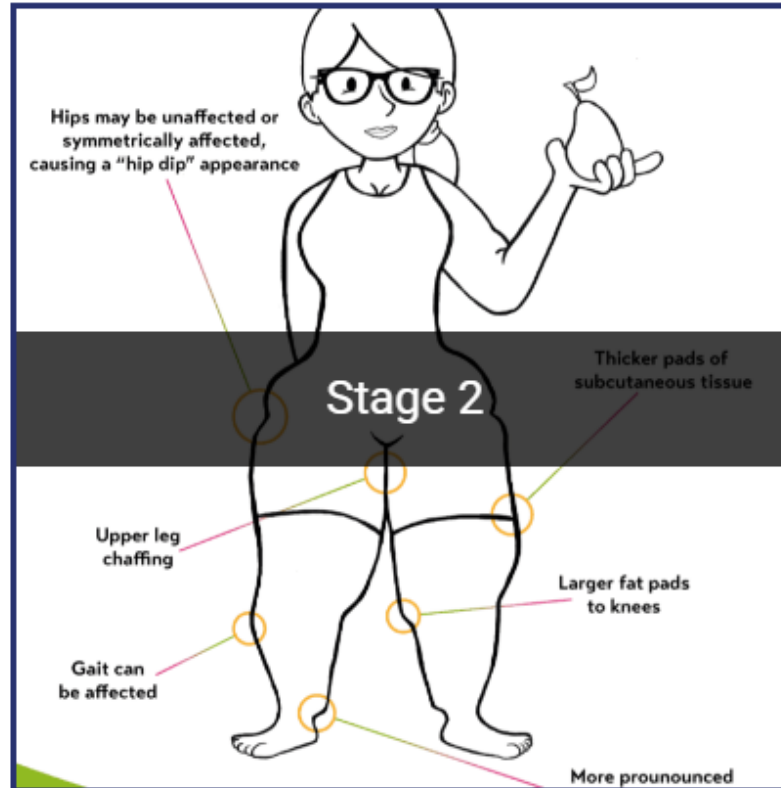
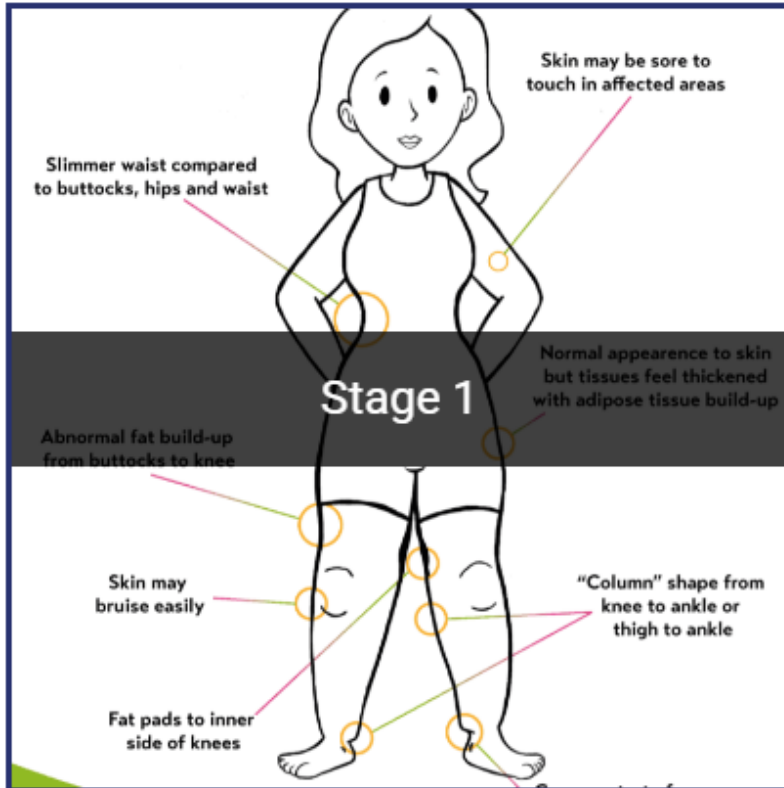
# Treatment Optimisation

- Medical review
- Weight
- Mental health
- Social support
- Infection risks and stabilisation
- Biomechanics
- Education
- Goals
- MDT

# Lipoedema

- Exclusively Female
- Thought to occur at puberty
- May be familial
- Always bilateral and symmetrical
- Feet and hands are spared
- May bruise easily
- Tenderness is common
- No diagnostic test – based on clinical signs, presentation and history
- Liposuction is helpful but not available on NHS
- Management is largely skin care to try and tighten slack tissues, Exercise – walking, swimming! Some struggle due to pain, compression in the form of leggings, capri shorts, made to measure shorts, tights.
- Body image big issue
- High body weight – loss of body weight often does not influence a change in shape distortion
- Some will develop lymphoedema as well

# Stages of Lipoedema



**Any  
questions?**

