

Abstract:**Complete Decongestive Therapy – the Standard of Care for Patients with Lymphedema.**

Complete decongestive therapy (CDT) is a two-phase therapy that consists of four basic components: manual lymph drainage (MLD), compression therapy, exercise, and skin care. The first phase of therapy is the intensive, decongestive phase of CDT typically provided by specially-trained and certified lymphedema therapists. The goals of Phase 1 are to reduce the patient's lymphedema, improve subjective complaints, and teach self-care techniques. Phase 2 is the self-care phase which is carried out by patients and is designed to maintain the results achieved in Phase 1.

CDT is the most common treatment for patients with lymphedema in developed countries, including the USA, Canada, and Germany. Even patients who are medically eligible for a surgical procedure to treat their lymphedema will receive pre- and post-surgical CDT, in most cases. CDT does not cure lymphedema but if applied skillfully and at the correct frequency, CDT is highly effective and has no side effects.

This presentation will provide an introduction to the techniques of CDT and emphasize the correct application of CDT to ensure its efficacy.

Objectives:

At the completion of this session, the attendee will be able to:

1. Identify the four basic components of CDT.
2. Explain the difference between Phase 1 and Phase 2 CDT.
3. Identify common therapeutic shortcomings that prevent or delay successful CDT.