



Carolinan HealthCare System
Blue Ridge

HEALTHY LIVING SECTION

Weekly tips and advice from your neighborhood Carolinas HealthCare System Blue Ridge providers.

Living with lymphedema? Here's how to manage your condition.

Lymphedema refers to the painful swelling, inflammation and tissue-thickening under the skin that occurs in a specific area, generally one of your arms or legs. It's most commonly caused by the removal of, or damage to, your lymph nodes or vessels as a part of cancer treatment. However, lymphedema can also be present at birth, though symptoms may not occur until later in life.

Possible signs of lymphedema include swelling, itching or a burning feeling in an arm or leg; thickening of the skin; or a feeling of tightness when wearing clothing, shoes, rings, etc.

Who develops lymphedema? The condition can develop quickly within a few days following surgery, or gradually over weeks, months or even years after treatment. Your lymphedema risk increases if you:

- Have undergone breast cancer treatment that involves radiation therapy or removing lymph nodes.
- Have had lymph nodes removed in the underarm, groin or pelvic areas.
- Have had radiation therapy to the underarm, groin, pelvic or neck areas.
- Have scar tissue in lymphatic ducts or veins under your collarbone.
- Have cancer that's spread to lymph nodes in your neck, chest, underarm, pelvis or abdomen.
- Have pelvic or abdominal tumors that place pressure on lymph vessels or ducts.

There's no cure for lymphedema, but you can take these precautions to help you cope:

- Keep the area elevated. Whenever possible, raise the affected arm or leg above your heart to prevent blood from collecting in your limb's lower portions.
- Wear loose-fitting clothes and accessories. Avoid tight elastic bands, socks, shoes and jewelry.
- Exercise regularly and gently. Physical activity can improve lymphatic drainage. Follow your physician's advice regarding specific hand, arm, foot or leg exercises.
- Protect your affected limb. Use your other arm for carrying bags, having blood drawn or getting blood pressure checks. Don't sit in one position for more than 30 minutes, and avoid crossing your legs.
- Guard against injuries, burns and infections. Treat any cuts or scrapes promptly by washing them with soap and water, and applying an antibacterial ointment and bandage. Call your healthcare provider immediately if you have signs of infection like redness, pain, heat, swelling and fever.
- Avoid extreme temperatures. Stay out of hot tubs and saunas and avoid using heating pads or ice packs.
- Protect your skin. Clean your skin gently and moisturize regularly. Use a sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15.
- Wear compression garments. Get fitted for these special garments or sleeves that help prevent swelling and lymphedema.

Levine Cancer Institute Blue Ridge at Carolinas HealthCare System Blue Ridge–Valdese has a lymphedema prevention class that meets at 4 p.m. the third Monday of each month. With proper education and care, lymphedema can be avoided, or if it develops, kept well under control. For more information, call 828- 580-7357.



Honey Ginger Grilled Salmon

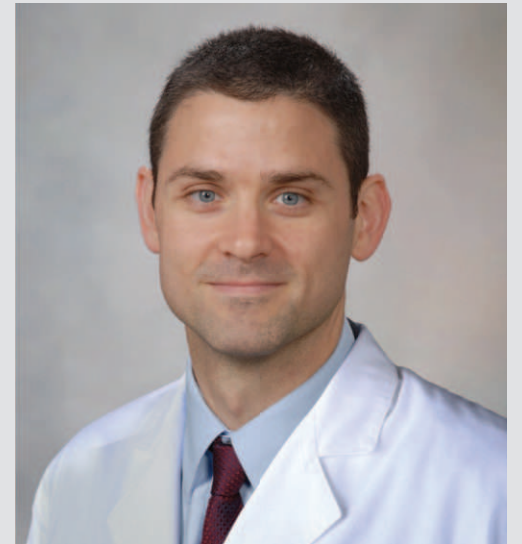
One green onion stalk holds almost 20 micrograms of vitamin K and 1.6 milligrams of vitamin C, both essential nutrients for bone health.

- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/3 cup reduced sodium soy sauce
- 1/3 cup orange juice
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1 green onion, chopped
- 1 1/2 pounds salmon fillets

In a large plastic bag, combine everything except the salmon and mix well. Place salmon in the bag and seal tightly. Turn the bag to coat the salmon with the marinade. Refrigerate 15 minutes or up to 30 minutes for stronger flavor.

Lightly grease grill rack. Preheat the grill to medium heat. Remove salmon from marinade, reserving the marinade to brush the salmon with up to the last 5 minutes of grilling time. Grill 12 to 15 minutes per inch of thickness or until the salmon flakes easily with a fork.

Serves: 4



Peripheral Vascular Disease

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Peripheral vascular disease (PVD) is a blanket term that covers any blood circulation disorder that occurs outside of the brain and heart. These disorders cause blood vessels to narrow, become blocked or spasm. They usually affect the blood supply of the arms, legs, stomach and intestines, and kidneys. The most common form of PVD is peripheral artery disease (PAD), and per the CDC, 12 to 20 percent of people over the age of 60 develop PAD.

Two main types of PVD exist: functional and organic. PAD falls into the organic type, which means blood vessels have undergone a change in structure due to inflammation, plaque buildup or tissue damage. Organic PVD is commonly caused by smoking, high blood pressure, diabetes and high cholesterol.

Functional PVD develops when there isn't any physical damage to the blood vessels, but they widen and narrow due to other factors, such as brain signals and temperature changes. Raynaud's disease is an example of functional PVD. The usual causes are emotional stress, cold temperatures, operating vibrating machinery or tools, and drugs.

Symptoms of both types of peripheral vascular disease include:

- Fatigue and cramping in legs and feet that worsens with physical activity.
- Reduced hair growth on legs and cramping when lying down.
- Legs and arms turn reddish blue or pale in color.
- Legs and feet have a weak pulse and wounds or ulcers that won't heal.
- Severe burning in toes, and possibly a blue color; nails might be overly thick and opaque.
- Muscles in legs and arms feel numb or heavy.

Three levels of treatment are used to combat the effects of PVD. The first is lifestyle changes: losing weight, exercising, quitting smoking, etc. If those efforts are not effective, then medications will be utilized. Finally, if the case is extreme enough, surgeries such as angioplasty will be considered. Seeking treatment is incredibly important, because complications from blood loss due to PVD can include gangrene, amputation, heart attack and stroke.

Symptoms of PVD may go away with rest, but without treatment, the disease will not. If you are experiencing any of those symptoms, consult with your doctor right away. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please call us at 828-580-6922.

A Disorder by Another Name

Since peripheral artery disease is far and away the most common form of peripheral vascular disease, it is often used interchangeably with PVD.



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