

The Ketogenic Solution for Lymphatic Disorders

Lose Weight and Dramatically
Reduce Lymphatic Swelling



Leslyn Keith

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Introduction

Spending time in any public place, such as an airport or shopping center, one can see myriad examples of people with obesity and weight-related lymphedema. Overweight women in short sleeve tops might display a distinctive shelf pattern at their elbows or have forearms that come to an abruptly narrower wrist. Often, a man can be seen in shorts with the telltale hemosiderin staining to his lower calves, suggesting chronic venous insufficiency, or have a distended abdomen riding over his belt. Some of these presentations can look quite painful.

Overweight and obesity commonly travel cheek by jowl with symptoms of lymphedema. The purpose of this book is to explain why this is so and to help doctors and therapists to understand that a lymphatic disorder cannot be treated if one of its major comorbidities or possible underlying causes remains unaddressed. In addition, I will show why conventional treatments have not alleviated the epidemic of obesity that people in

this country and most of the world are experiencing and suggest a better option for management using a ketogenic diet.

Presently, it is more likely than not for a client who is referred to a clinical practice for lymphedema therapy to also have a severe weight problem. Using conventional treatment tools and protocols which tend to deal with only the swelling, successful outcomes seemed to be dwindling. In workshops and roundtable discussions which I have moderated at lymphedema conferences over the past few years on the topic of obesity and lymphedema, the majority of therapists have reported a trend

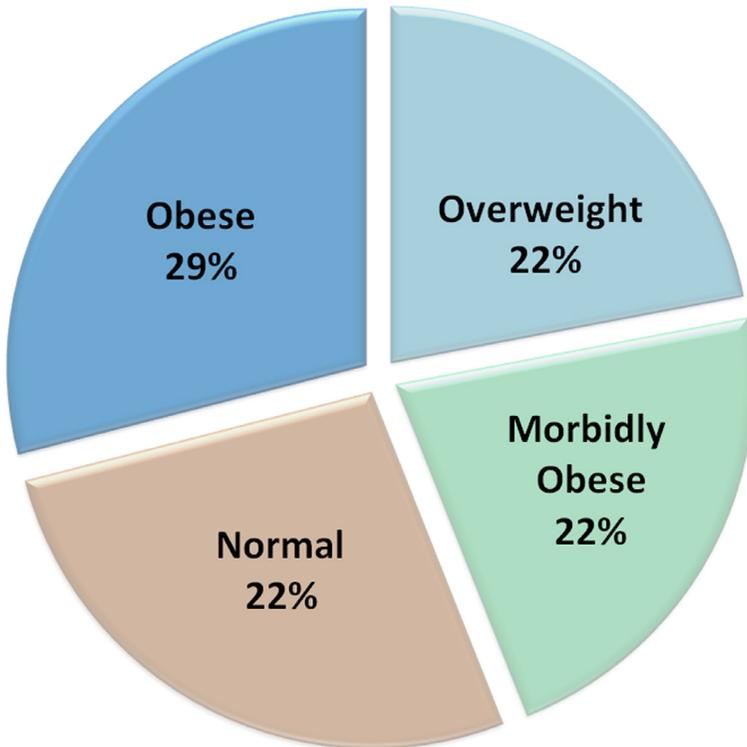


Figure 1. Distribution of patients by Body Mass Index (BMI). Three quarters of my patients during a six month period were overweight or obese.

of increasing obesity among their clientele. These lymphedema therapists report that now well over 50% of their clients are obese, with a large portion of those being morbidly obese. I was not surprised when I found this trend reflected in my own clinic. Many eager interns have volunteered in my clinic, and I gave one the exercise of quantifying the percentage of my clients that were overweight or obese. Figure 1 shows the Body Mass Index (BMI) distribution of patients seen during a six month time period in 2014 in my practice.

An increasing number of lymphedema therapy clinics are mandating that their obese clients with lymphedema must be involved in a weight loss program concomitantly with their lymphedema treatment.^{1,2} My clinic is also instituting this requirement, as successful treatment of clients with both lymphedema and obesity is virtually impossible if weight management is ignored. Obese clients often return for treatment year after year with no permanent beneficial outcomes. The salient point of this book is to convince medical personnel dealing with clients with lymphedema to pay as much attention to their clients' obesity as to the lymphedema itself.

A few years ago I became interested in weight loss strategies which differ from conventional approaches. These effective methods, although neither new nor unique, had been hidden in a dietary milieu dominated by conventional wisdom represented by the USDA's food pyramid and more recently, MyPlate.³ In discussions with my overweight clients, I came to the conclusion that they were, in fact, trying to follow their doctor's, and thus the government's, recommendations in their efforts to lose weight. Sadly, many had failed time and again to lose their excess body

fat, or to keep it off, had they managed to achieve any weight loss at all. Many, if not most, had taken the failure as their own. At the time that they were referred to me, both patient and doctor had, in effect, given up on solving their weight condition.

My strategy had to be different.

One of my clients gave me Gary Taubes' *Why We Get Fat, and What to Do About It*. The book sat on a shelf for a few days until my partner Bill picked it up and read it. He went on to read Taubes' *Good Calories, Bad Calories*, and became inspired to amass shelves full of books on the subject of nutrition related to weight loss and energy partitioning. His enthusiastic exclamations while reading enticed me and I ended up reading extensively on the subject as well. I have now collected a great number of books and studies which bolster the idea that weight loss and maintenance are more affected by a diet's macronutrient content than by limits on calories. These ideas will be discussed in Chapter 3.

In the years since, I have expanded my typical consultation with my clients to include proper weight management technique as an adjunct to conventional treatment of their lymphedema and, consequently, the number of successful outcomes among my clients with obesity has been rising. The rationale for focusing on weight loss in addition to established lymphedema therapy protocol is based on the fact that adipose tissue is not just idle tissue, but interacts hormonally with all other systems in the body. Of particular importance to the topic here is the interaction between lymphatics and adipose tissue. Adipose cells were, until recently, seen as only repositories of fat which did not interact with other systems. That view has changed, and evidence now clearly demonstrates that adipose cells communicate through

the release of hormones, causing multiple reactions in the body (see Chapter 1).

Further study has revealed to me that lymphatic and adipose tissues work quite closely together and any change in one is reflected quickly in a response in the other. This is typical of hundreds of other feedback mechanisms in the body.⁴ Isolating one thing on which to focus when treating any disease is short-sighted. This has solidified in my mind the concept that to effectively deal with a client's lymphedema, the clinician must address any excess weight of the client along with their lymphedema. A scientific approach needs to be utilized when incorporating any treatment method and the science has come down on the side of ketogenic nutrition for weight loss as being the most effective and healthiest approach.⁵⁻⁸ Unfortunately, the utilization of this way of eating for weight loss has mainly been limited by a fear of fat consumption.

Fat phobia in relation to lymphedema treatment is remarkable when considered in light of the fact that the lymphatic system runs substantially on lipids and is the major transporter of dietary fat into blood circulation. The latest release of Dietary Guidelines for Americans now concedes that dietary fats, including cholesterol and saturated fat, are no longer the villains they were portrayed to be over the past half century.⁹

It has been a joy to watch clients, who had a lack of success on prior weight loss programs, use the methods I recommend. They reduce their weight, take a load of pressure off their swelling and increase the functionality and health of their body. In several cases, simply losing weight has caused clients' lymphedema to spontaneously reduce. I'm gratified when a client comes back

months or years later to thank me for showing them how it all fits together and for giving them the information and the ability to resolve their swelling.

This information has been available for many decades, yet few practitioners are putting it into practice. One of my goals for writing this book is to increase the understanding of the relationship between lymphatic disorders and obesity among medical professionals. When clinicians are armed with this knowledge, they will be better able to assist in lessening their clients' suffering. Using this knowledge, along with a complete program that I have developed to introduce and guide clients to ketogenic nutrition (a lifestyle modification course called *Lymphatic Lifestyle Solutions*—see Appendix III), clinicians will be more successful in their therapy practices. My wish is that more therapists will experience clients returning to their lymphedema clinics, not for more treatment, but to give thanks for introducing them to this healthy lifestyle and the better management of their lymphedema.

Appendix III

Lymphatic Lifestyle Solutions Program

Lymphatic Lifestyle Solutions: A Weight Management Program for Individuals with Lymphedema is available for purchase.

The *Lymphatic Lifestyle Solutions* weight management program, based on diet and lifestyle, has been found to be the most effective method of retaining an ideal weight and lasting health. Following the program can lead to significant reduction, and in some cases, complete resolution of symptoms. The Low-Carbohydrate High-Fat methods used in my program are evidence-based and scientifically proven.

Lymphatic Lifestyle Solutions is a fully developed program that is all-inclusive for a clinician to “hit the ground running” with a program designed to offer the greatest results obtainable for their clients with lymphatic and obesity related issues.

To obtain the program supplies with license to implement

the *Lymphatic Lifestyle Solutions* program in your clinic, please contact me at leslynkeithot@gmail.com or call: (805) 748-6519 to discuss costs and delivery details.

The package you will receive includes all materials needed to run a professional weight-loss program recommended for up to 25 participants per group, with no limit to how many groups may be offered at a time.

The program incorporates handouts, PowerPoint presentations, suggested testing and evaluation materials, and instructions. The course is divided into 12 modules. The *Lymphatic Lifestyle Solutions* components include:

- Participant Course Manual binder, complete with presentation pages, exercises, handouts and resources
- Leader Course Manual binder, complete with Lesson Plans for each module, all participant worksheets and handouts, along with suggested assessments and marketing materials.
- Electronic copies of the following:
 - Presentation files for 12 modules
 - All components of Participant and Leader Manuals
- A selection of the twelve weekly meeting topics include:
 - Lifestyle Modification
 - Eating for Health and Weight Loss
 - Prevention/Management of Chronic Medical Conditions
 - Physical Activity and Exercise
 - Stress Management
 - Life Balance and Time Management
 - Planning for Sustained Change

The *Lymphatic Lifestyle Solutions* program has been developed by Leslyn Keith, OTD, CLT-LANA, an occupational therapist treating patients who have lymphatic disorders, on the central coast of California over the past 20 years. Dr. Keith is a certified lymphedema therapist specializing in obesity-related lymphedema and other chronic weight-related conditions. She is nationally certified by the Lymphology Association of North America (LANA) and is a member of the Obesity Medicine Association. She obtained her doctorate in occupational therapy at the University of Utah.

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About the Author

Leslyn Keith, OTD, OTR/L, CLT-LANA, has a Clinical Doctorate in Occupational Therapy with an emphasis on lymphedema and obesity. She was certified as a Lymphedema Therapist in 2000 and became LANA-certified in 2001. Dr. Keith has started four lymphedema therapy programs in California including two in private practice.

In addition to treating lymphedema and other lymphatic disorders, she currently researches, consults, and lectures on lymphedema, lipedema, and obesity nationally. She is also an instructor for Klose Training.

Her professional memberships include the American Occupational Therapy Association, National Lymphedema Network, Lymphology Association of North America, Obesity Medicine Association, and International Society of Lymphology.

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