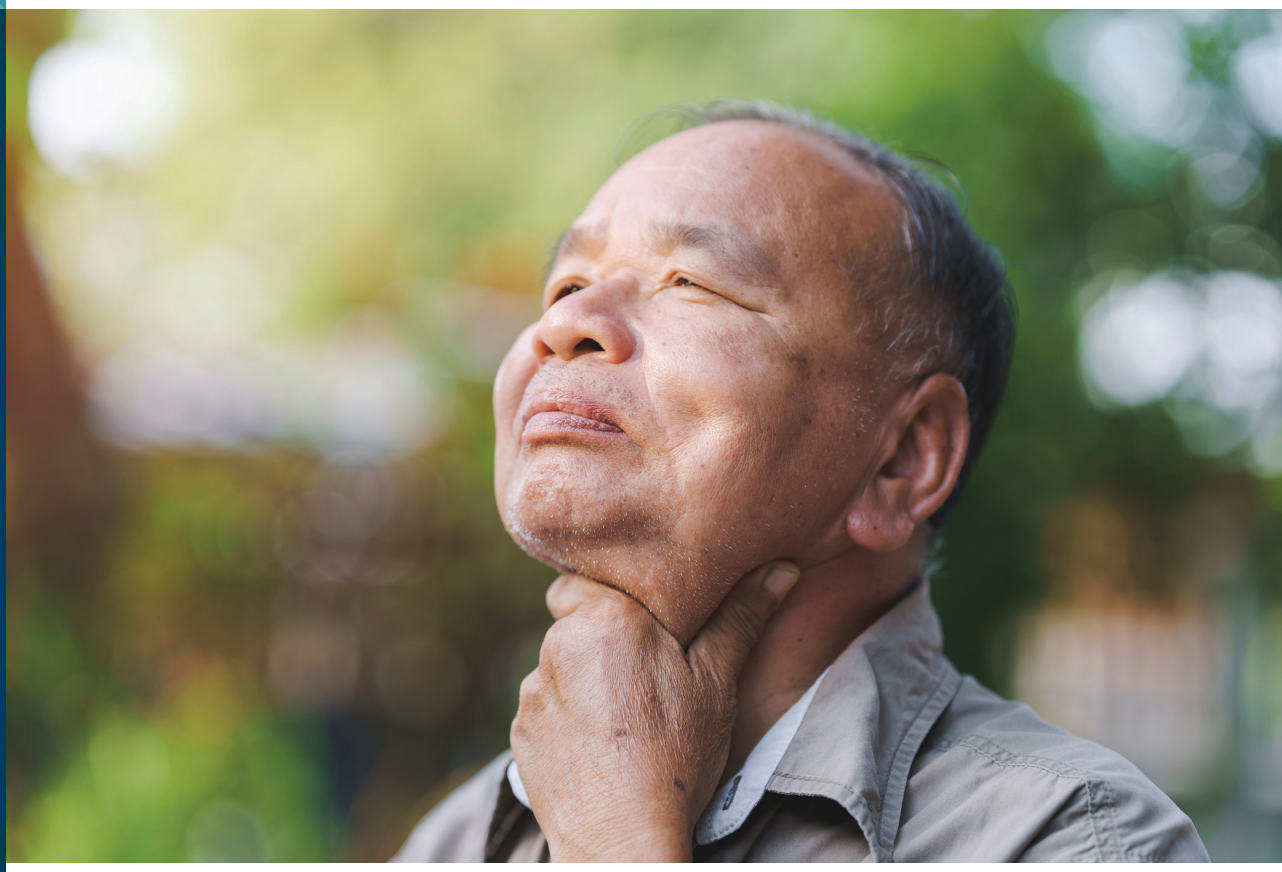
Patients with head and neck cancer-related lymphedema need your support.

New data shows Flexitouch® Plus delivers sustained results over time.

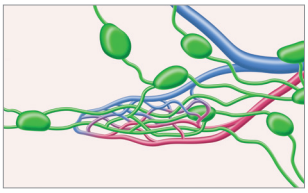


Tactile MEDICAL®

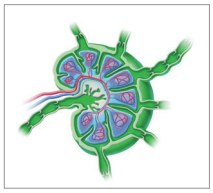
What is Lymphedema? Why is it So Common?

Lymphedema is a build-up of extracellular fluid comprised primarily of protein, cellular debris and other molecules in the interstitium. This build-up can cause swelling and discomfort. Lymphedema is often a chronic condition and can progressively become more severe. Therefore, early and careful management is needed to help reduce lymphedema symptoms and keep them from getting worse.

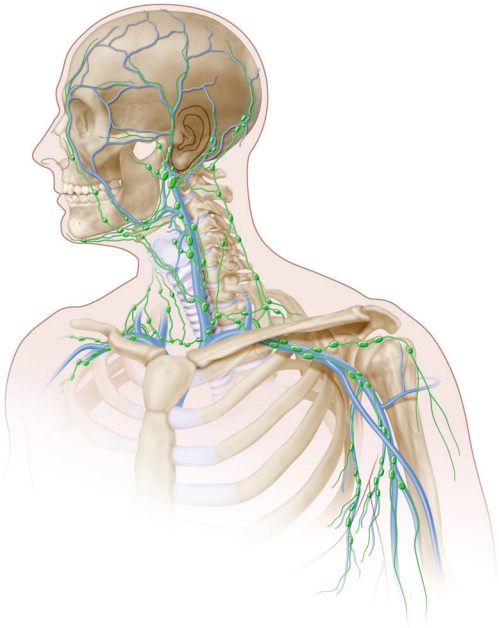
- Over one-third of the body's lymph nodes are in the head and neck
- Tumors, surgery and radiation cause lymphatic damage to nodes, vessels and capillaries
- Damage to the lymphatics leads to swelling, inflammation and fibrosis – both internally and externally



Lymphatics in Capillary Beds



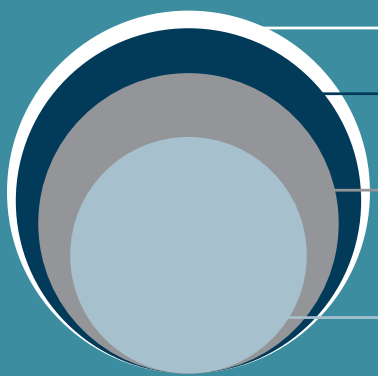
Lymph Node with One Way Valves



An Increasingly Prevalent Condition

Increasingly, human papillomavirus (HPV) patients make up the head and neck cancer population.[1] These patients are younger and incidence rates are increasing. Survival rates are also increasing, leaving patients to cope for decades with the burdensome effects of their cancer treatment.

12 MONTHS POST-TREATMENT



All HNC patients

90%
have lymphedema

75%
of lymphedema cases are moderate/severe

47%
have moderate/severe fibrosis

90%
of patients have lymphedema symptoms after head/neck cancer treatment[2]

Head and Neck Lymphedema Presents Internally and Externally

Mild Swelling **Moderate Swelling** **Severe Swelling**

Lymphedema Significantly Impacts Quality of Life

Across the patient population, symptom presentation varies widely based on cancer site, stage, and treatment strategy. The location of symptoms makes lymphedema related to head and neck cancer particularly problematic for patients.

THIS PATIENT POPULATION EXHIBITS SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED RISK OF DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE – EVEN WHEN CANCER FREE[3]

LYMPHEDEMA SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:[4]

- **Dysphagia**
- **Reduced range of motion**
- **Swelling** – internal and external
- **Vocal changes or difficulty speaking**
- **Pain, tightness and discomfort**
- **Scarring or fibrosis**
- **Tingling and numbness**
- **Difficulty breathing**

1. Gillison et al *J Clin Oncol* 2015. doi: 10.1200/JCO.2015.61.6995 **2.** Ridner, S.H., et al, . Lymphat Res Biol, 2016. 14(4): p. 198-205.
3. Osazuwa-Peters et al *Cancer* 2018. doi: 10.1002/cncr.31675 **4.** Doersam et al. *Lymphat Res Biol* 2019. doi: 10.1089/lrb.2019.0034.

Barriers to Professional Lymphedema Care

Research shows that only 15% of head and neck cancer survivors utilize professional therapy from an Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) or Certified Lymphedema Therapist (CLT) for their symptoms.[1] When patients do receive treatment, the typical therapy can be difficult for patients to continue on their own for the long term.

CONSERVATIVE LYMPHEDEMA TREATMENT AND ITS SUBSTANTIAL BARRIERS

Conservative Treatment	Barrier for Long Term Utilization[2]
In-clinic therapy with professional manual lymphatic drainage (MLD)	▪ Distance from specialists ▪ Access to specialists ▪ Time or financial barriers ▪ Lack of insurance coverage
Self MLD	▪ Difficulty given impacted anatomy ▪ Difficult learning curve
Compression masks	▪ Impractical for daily living ▪ Uncomfortable

A prospective, multi-site RCT (n=236) validated that patients experience barriers to care including: lack of availability of trained therapists-especially in rural areas, presenting increased travel time and expense for patients.[3]

A HYBRID APPROACH OF BOTH THERAPY AND AN ADVANCED PNEUMATIC COMPRESSION DEVICE (APCD) IS RECOMMENDED TO OPTIMIZE PATIENT OUTCOMES.

1. Wang et al *Head Neck* 2019. doi: 10.1002/hed.25844. **2.** Deng and Murphy *Support Care Cancer* 2016. doi:10.1007/s00520-016-3356-2. **3.** Murphy BA, et al. *Head Neck*. 2026;48(4):1077-1087. doi:10.1002/hed.70155. **4.** Karaca-Mandic et al *JAMA Dermatol* 2015. doi: 10.1001/jamadermatol.2015.1895. **5.** Ridner et al *Oncol Nurs Forum* 2008. doi: 10.1188/08.ONF.671-680. **6.** Ridner et al *Lymphat Res Biol* 2016. doi: 10.1089/lrb.2016.0001.

Advanced Pneumatic Compression Device for Lymphedema Treatment

Given the difficulties survivors of head and neck cancer face with ongoing self treatment of their lymphedema symptoms, an APCD offers an easy to use, effective option. APCDs are clinically proven and widely used for the management of cancer related lymphedema.[4,5]

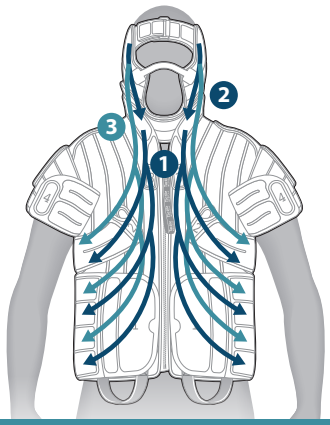
Flexitouch® Plus is the only pneumatic compression device 510(k) cleared for use in the head and neck.

Mechanism of Action of the Flexitouch Plus System

The Flexitouch Plus APCD provides dynamic pressure to stimulate the lymphatic system to remove excess fluid and reduce edema. The pneumatic chambers sequentially inflate and deflate for just a few seconds each, creating a gentle wavelike application of pressure to stimulate the movement of lymphatic fluid and direct it toward properly functioning areas of the body.

Flexitouch Plus closely mimics manual lymphatic drainage, directing fluid from the:

1. Neck and chest toward the underarm
2. Head and face toward the neck
3. Head, neck and face toward the healthy regions of the chest in one continuous motion



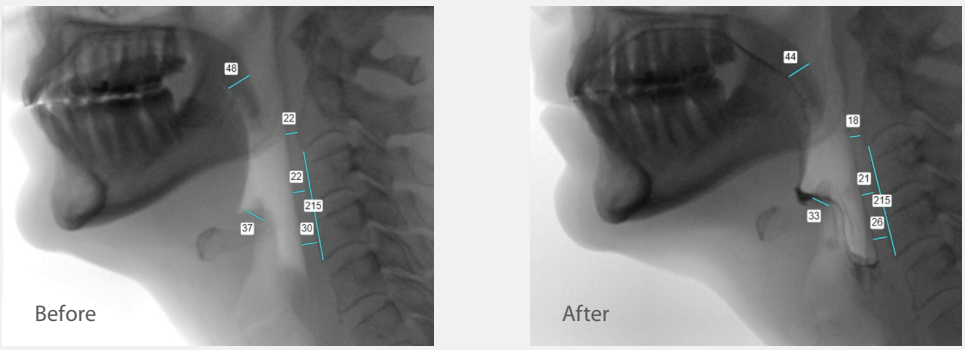
89% **of patients** report improvement in head and neck swelling[6]

32-minute daily treatment time

Immediate Effects of Flexitouch Plus on Internal and External Lymphedema

A retrospective study of 30 head and neck cancer survivors at least three months post-radiation therapy underwent a single 32-minute treatment of Flexitouch Plus.[1]

All 30 subjects had immediate and statistically significant reductions in internal and external measurements after a single Flexitouch Plus treatment



Pre and post treatment scouts with reduction of pixels following a single treatment of Flexitouch Plus.

PATIENT-REPORTED OUTCOMES:

- Decreased swelling: 97%
- Increased swallow ability: 72%
- Increased range of motion in neck: 86%
- Decreased pain: 59%

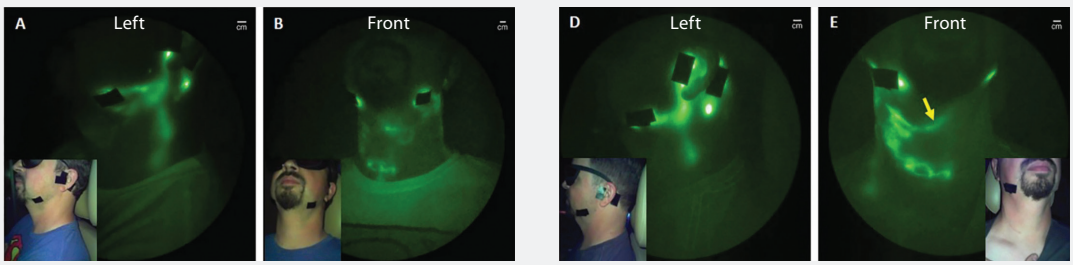
Immediate tissue thickness reductions were found even in late-RT patients with fibrosis. Patients reported improved perception of swallow ability, pain, skin, and neck range of motion.

Imaging Study: Improved Lymphatic Flow with Flexitouch Plus[2]

In a study in which 10 patients underwent imaging with indocyanine green dye, all patients showed improved lymphatic uptake after two weeks of using the Flexitouch.

Flexitouch produces the same physiological impact in the breast cancer-related population; flow is directed from the damaged area toward healthier nodes. The Flexitouch clears pathways downstream from the swollen areas so the pooled lymph can start flowing again.

After two weeks of using Flexitouch Plus, patient shows better-formed lymphatics/drainage to nodes



Flexitouch Plus is Clinically Proven to Provide Effective Treatment[3-5]

SYMPTOMATIC IMPROVEMENT

4x greater improvement in swallowing solids[4]	Significant reduction in lymphedema-related pain[3]	Improvement in breathing[3]

ADHERENCE AND PATIENT SATISFACTION

71% daily adherence[3]	**90%** patient satisfaction[5]	Significant improvement in managing lymphedema at home[3]

Randomized Control Trial Proves Results are Durable Over Time[6,7]

A study of 236 subjects that evaluated the effectiveness of Flexitouch Plus compared to usual care.

- Flexitouch Plus group: 32-minute daily sessions
- Usual care group: therapist-guided lymphedema treatment and ongoing self-care

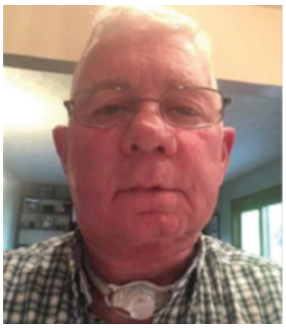
After 2 months, APCD usage as a first line therapy reported similar improvement to usual care in relieving lymphedema-related symptom burden. **Flexitouch Plus group achieved a statistically significant reduction in external swelling whereas usual care did not.**[6]

At 6 months, **Flexitouch Plus group demonstrated a greater improvement in objective lymphedema measures.**[7]

1. Gregor JW, et al. *Head Neck*. 2025. doi:10.1002/hed.27983. **2.** Gutierrez et al *Otolaryng Head Neck* 2019. doi: 10.1177/0194599818823180. **3.** Gutiérrez et al *Head Neck* 2020. doi: 10.1002/hed.26110. **4.** Ridner et al *Lymphat Res Biol* 2016. doi: 10.1089/lrb.2016.0001. **5.** Ridner et al Oncol Nurs Forum 2008. doi: 10.1188/08.ONF.671-680. **6.** Murphy et al *Head Neck* 2026. doi:10.1002/hed.70155. **7.** Ridner SH, Smith D, Kline-Quiroz C, Jensen K, Sukari A, Bhayani M, Mehta V, Shah J, Willey C, Lee H, Aulino J, Murphy B. Long-term outcomes of advanced pneumatic compression versus usual care for head and neck cancer related lymphedema. Poster presented at: American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine (ACRM) 2025 Annual Conference; 2025.

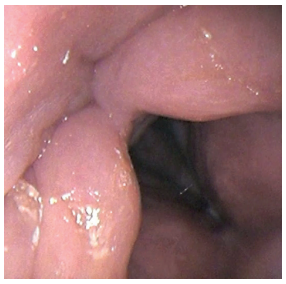
TREATMENT RESULTS

Before

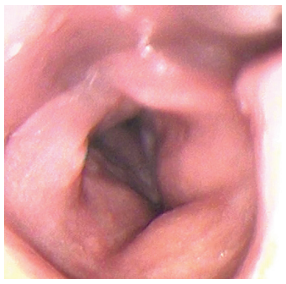


3 months

8 months

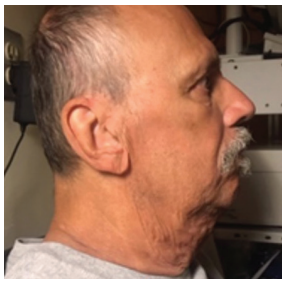


Before



After

Before: 3 months post-radiation treatment



After: One 32-minute Flexitouch Plus treatment

DOWNLOAD OUR SYMPTOM SCREENER TO HELP IDENTIFY YOUR PATIENTS' CHRONIC SWELLING.

Tactile Medical is a leader in developing and marketing at-home therapies for people suffering from underserved, chronic conditions lymphedema, lipedema, chronic venous insufficiency, and chronic pulmonary disease by helping them live better and care for themselves at home.

Individual results may vary.

Indications/contraindications: Indications, contraindications, warnings, and instructions for use can be found in the product labeling supplied with each device.

Caution: Federal (U.S.) law restricts this device to sale by or on the order of a licensed healthcare practitioner.

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