

Insurance Coverage for Lymphedema Surgery

What you should know

This handout explains insurance coverage for surgery to treat lymphedema.

Will my insurance cover lymphedema surgery?

At UW Medical Center, we treat lymphedema with the most up-to-date surgical and imaging methods. Because this treatment is fairly new, some health insurers may not cover it. They may say that it is “not proven effective” or that it is “experimental” or “investigational.”

If you and your provider decide to use surgery and imaging to treat your lymphedema, UWMC will try to get authorization from your insurer.

What can I do?

Please contact your health insurer. Their phone number is on the back of your insurance card.

Ask about their policy for covering “surgical/procedural treatment for lymphedema.” They should be able to explain their policy for your treatment. They can also give you a list of steps to take, if you need to appeal their decision. Be sure to ask how long you will have to make an appeal.



Contact your health insurer to find out if they cover surgery to treat lymphedema.

What if they deny coverage?

If your insurer denies coverage for your lymphedema surgery:

- UW Medicine will not do an appeal for you. But, if you choose to appeal, we will give you the information you need to make your appeal. We can give you many medical articles that explain that this surgery is effective in treating lymphedema.
- We will ask you to sign a “Notice of Non-Coverage” form for the services your insurer will not cover. By signing this form, you accept

that UW Medicine may bill you for the surgery and related imaging or procedures. Our clinic staff can give you an estimate of the cost of these services.

Insurance Policies

Here are links to the policy manuals of some major health insurers. Please note your plan may or may not follow this policy. Be sure to contact your insurer directly to find out about their coverage.

- **Regence** (see p. 16):
<http://blue.regence.com/trgmedpol/medicine/med149.pdf>
- **Premera**: www.premera.com/medicalpolicies/7.01.567.pdf
- **Aetna**: www.aetna.com/cpb/medical/data/1_99/0069.html
- **Cigna**:
https://cignaforhcp.cigna.com/public/content/pdf/coveragePolicies/medical/mm_0531_coveragepositioncriteria_for_lymphedema_and_lipedema.pdf
- **Boeing**:
www.medicalpolicy.hcsc.net/medicalpolicy/activePolicyPage?lid=j0s5snm3&corpEntCd=IL1

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Center for Reconstructive Surgery: 206.598.1217