

VGH/UBC Lymphedema Program Referral Process

(compiled 04/2021)

The Current Process:

Referrals can be made:

- a. Family physicians,
- b. Consultant physicians and surgeons
- c. Nurse Practitioners

Dr Elliott Weiss MD, Consultant in Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

Appropriate patient may include those where there is a need to establish or clarify a diagnosis of lymphedema or lipedema, for medical management issues, and/or other relevant concerns.

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Dr. Erin Brown MD, PhD. for a referral to the VGH/UBC clinic. This is for patients who have been diagnosed with Lymphedema, either primary or secondary, and have been consistently using conservative measures for 6 or more months. The multi-disciplinary clinic focuses on disease staging for individuals considering surgical management. The clinic is not accepting Lipedema referrals at this time.

**Dr Erin Brown is located at
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What to Expect Following a Referral:

Appointments will be confirmed by the Clinic staff. Patients are currently seen at the Diamond Health Care Centre at VGH and UBC Hospital. ICG Lymphangiography is currently performed at UBC.

VGH/UBC Central Lymphedema referral system?

A central referral system is planned for the future. The clinical team is working on securing ongoing administrative support with this process. Guidelines for therapists may be included at that time.

VGH/UBC Lymphedema Program:

Mandate – Assessment and Management of British Columbians with primary or secondary Lymphedema.

Dr. Elliott Weiss has been caring for and advocating on behalf of individuals with Lymphedema in British Columbia for decades. Over the past 10 years, he recognized the potential for enhanced surgical management of these patients, as reports of successful reconstruction were published. The Division of Plastic Surgery at UBC also observed this gap in patient care and supported a sabbatical for Dr. Erin Brown to travel to Japan, Korea and Taiwan to receive exposure to the world leaders in Lymphedema reconstruction. Together with Dr. Kathryn Isaac, the 'Patricia Clouston' Chair in Breast Reconstructive Surgery, Drs Elliott and Brown form the physician leads for the Provincial Lymphedema Program. We look forward to expanding our program to continue to improve the care we deliver. For example, Dr. Moira Stilwell has redesigned the technique for lymphoscintigraphy which has dramatically improved our ability to map out lymphatic flow and function.

Our approach to patient care has been comprehensive assessment, with the goal to provide the most accurate diagnosis and staging, maximize conservative management and determine if surgical treatment may be beneficial. Both lymphaticovenous anastomosis (LVA) and vascularized lymph node transfers (VLNT) will be offered to appropriate patients, along with other interventions, such as liposuction and skin resection. The exact nature of treatment will be guided by the assessment of each patient and the best available evidence to support the most effective interventions. We will be gathering detailed information about all patients to ensure that our evaluations and treatments provide the highest level of care, and continue to improve over time.

Referrals from across the province can be made through your GP to Dr. Brown's office.

DR ERIN BROWN, MD, PhD, FRCSC
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