

# Lymphedema Care at Rush

Our team of plastic surgeons at Rush University Medical Center have expertise in microvascular surgery, which can greatly mitigate the debilitating symptoms patients experience with lymphedema. Patients can spend the majority of their day attending to treatment, such as receiving massage, applying compression bandages and stockings and performing pneumatic pumping, in order to regain basic functional wellness and fit comfortably in their own clothes.

Our surgeons offer two main microvascular procedures: lymphovenous bypass and vascularized lymph node transfer. Lymphovenous bypass reroutes lymphatic channels around damaged lymph nodes and connects them directly into a person's veins. Vascularized lymph node transfer transplants healthy, nonessential lymph nodes from the groin, abdomen or other parts of the body as vascularized flaps to replace affected lymph nodes. This rewires the normal drainage function of the lymphatic system.

## Who is an ideal candidate for microvascular surgery?

- Patients newly diagnosed with breast cancer who are about to undergo a mastectomy (lymphovenous bypass can be used as a preventative treatment for lymphedema);
- Patients post-mastectomy still in need of breast reconstruction who developed lymphedema
- Patients with early stage lymphedema who have demonstrated improvement with lymphedema therapy

## Why refer your patients here?

**Surgical expertise:** Our providers are specially trained in the prevention and treatment of lymphedema using microsurgical techniques, including vascularized lymph node transfer and lymphovenous bypass. We are also specialized in immediate lymphatic reconstruction, which is performed in an attempt to lower the risk of lymphedema in patients undergoing axillary lymph node dissection.

**Advanced diagnostics:** We offer the latest diagnostic technology, such as lymphoscintigraphy, MR lymphography and ICG lymphangiography, which uses a fluorescent dye to trace lymph drainage, pinpoint blockages for potential bypasses and identify working lymphatic channels.

**Well-rounded care:** Through our partnership with Select Medical, certified lymphedema therapists can assess impairments in upper arm motion, pain and swelling and activities of daily living in order to provide complete decongestive therapy for breast cancer survivors.

## Conditions We Treat

### Primary (inherited) lymphedema

Congenital lymphedema  
Lymphedema praecox  
Lymphedema tarda

### Secondary (acquired) lymphedema due to:

Infection  
Radiation  
Surgical cancer treatment  
Trauma

### Lymphedema prevention

## Treatments

Breast autologous reconstruction with combined vascularized lymph node transfer  
Complete decongestive therapy  
Compression treatments, garments and bandaging  
Debulking  
Immediate lymphatic reconstruction including lymphovenous bypass (LVB) at time of axillary node dissection  
Liposuction  
Lymphaticovenous bypass  
Manual lymphatic drainage  
Occupational therapy  
Vascularized lymph node transfer

## Meet our team

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George Kokosis, MD  
**Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery**  
**Board certifications:** Plastic Surgery,  
Surgery



Deana Shenaq, MD  
**Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery**  
**Board certifications:** Plastic Surgery



David Kurlander, MD  
**Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery**  
**Board eligible:** Plastic Surgery

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**To refer a patient or request a consult, call (312) 563-3000.**

Visit [rush.edu/lymphedema](https://rush.edu/lymphedema)

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## Locations

### **Rush University Medical Center**

Professional Building  
1725 W. Harrison St., Suite 425  
Chicago, IL 60612

### **Rush South Loop**

1411 S. Michigan Ave.  
5th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60605

### **Rush Oak Park**

610 S. Maple Ave.  
Oak Park, IL 60304