

Mayo Clinic Minute

Breast cancer, exercise and lymphedema

Video	Audio
Vivien Williams	Approximately 1 in 8 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime. And, of those women, approximately 20 percent will also get lymphedema as a result of treatment.
Sarah McLaughlin, M.D. Surgery Mayo Clinic	“Lymphedema is one of the most feared complications we have with breast cancer.”
Vivien Williams	Mayo Clinic surgeon Dr. Sarah McLaughlin says lymphedema causes uncomfortable and unsightly swelling of the arm. Plus ...
Sarah McLaughlin, M.D.	“It’s a constant reminder of the treatment they went through.”
Vivien Williams	Why lymphedema happens is unclear, but it likely has to do with an imbalance in the lymph system after surgery or radiation. Exercise has long been considered a no-no for women who’ve gone through treatment, because the thought was moving increased your risk of developing lymphedema or making it worse. But recent research shows otherwise.
Sarah McLaughlin, M.D.	“There’s really, at this point, not a downside to exercise.”
Vivien Williams	
Sarah McLaughlin, M.D.	“We tell all of our patients to exercise. Use your arm, and be active.”
Vivien Williams	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I’m Vivien Williams.