



Many mums-to-be experience swollen ankles during their pregnancy. Although this type of swelling (or oedema) can indicate a dangerous condition called pre-eclampsia, a certain amount of oedema is normal

Pregnancy – swollen ankles

During pregnancy, the body naturally retains more fluid and the circulatory system comes under increased pressure. Tips such as putting your feet up and taking it easy can help alleviate this problem, however, we often feel a little guilty ‘resting’ when there is so much to do. There are, therefore, many mums putting up with this uncomfortable and unattractive condition which largely affects women in their third trimester.



So, what is Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD) and how can it help reduce swollen ankles?

MLD's intensely relaxing effect masks the strength of this gentle therapy. It's a very light, massage-like treatment on the bare skin improving the efficiency of the lymphatic system which removes fluid and other waste products from the tissues. This results in lessening the swelling and puffiness of the ankles.

The lymphatic system is also an important part of the body's defence against infection. It is made up of groups of lymph nodes or glands throughout the body, connected by a network of lymphatic vessels.

The therapist does not use oils or creams and does not normally wear gloves.

The MLD Treatment – what to expect

- The first visit to a trained therapist will include a consultation.
- Where appropriate, the therapist will work in conjunction with your medical practitioner.
- The therapist will recommend the duration and frequency of sessions.
- You will probably be asked to remove some of your clothing and lie on a treatment couch.
- You will be covered with towels.
- As no oils or creams are used it is safe, even if you have sensitive skin.
- The gentle, pumping technique works to assist your body's natural processes.
- Afterwards, you will feel more comfortable, relaxed and even clear headed!



Are there any side effects to the treatment?

There are usually no negative side effects to MLD and it is safe to eat before and after a session. It helps if you keep your fluid intake up by drinking water regularly.

You may need to go to the toilet more often as the re-energised lymphatic system starts to move excess fluid and waste.

Route to Treatment

MLD is a specialised form of treatment so it's important you go to a properly trained therapist. You can visit the MLD^{UK} website at www.mlduk.org.uk to locate your nearest accredited MLD practitioner. MLD^{UK} members are qualified, insured, and up to date in their education and practice.