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

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

George Kokosis, MD  
Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery  
Board certifications: Plastic 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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Visit rush.edu/lymphedema

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

Excellence is just the beginning.