

PHYSIOPOD® UK PATIENT GLOSSARY

Clinical Term & Everyday Meaning	Clinical Evidence & Study Links
Adipocytokine Signature Everyday translation: Fat-cell chemical markers A specific pattern of chemical signals in your blood (specifically FGF21 and chemerin) that could help identify lipoedema, representing a major development toward a reliable, objective diagnostic test.	Mühlberg et al., 2026
Adipose Heterogeneity Everyday translation: Different types of fat tissue The understanding that fat behaves differently across various parts of your body (such as your arms, legs, or tummy). Each area has its own genetic programme and works like a distinct mini-organ.	Reid et al., 2026
Complex Decongestive Therapy (CDT) Everyday translation: Combined physical therapy A standardised, non-surgical treatment programme to support lymphatic and tissue health. It combines professional manual lymphatic drainage (MLD/SLD), custom medical-grade compression, daily skincare, and gentle exercise.	Wounds UK, 2017
Congested Tissue State Everyday translation: Stagnant fluid buildup A pathological state where localised tissue fluid clearance fluctuates, causing metabolic and lymphatic waste products to pool in interstitial spaces. This triggers symmetrical swelling (orthostatic oedema), skin temperature cooling, and an aching tightness (often concentrated around knee fat pads).	Dal'Forno-Dini et al., 2025 Teo et al., 2016 Luta et al., 2025
Connective Tissue Matrix Fragility Everyday translation: Weak supportive tissue An underlying structural weakness in the mesh-like tissue that supports your skin and fat cells. Along with mild inflammation, this fragility can cause easy bruising, heavy limbs, and tenderness.	Duhon et al., 2022
Cuffing (or Bracelet) Effect Everyday translation: Tissue cuffing at wrists and ankles A key visual marker of lipoedema where the abnormal fat stops abruptly just above your wrists or ankles, completely sparing your hands and feet.	Lipedema Foundation, 2025

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Endogenous Microdeformations Everyday translation: Inner tissue vibrations Tiny, microscopic movements and changes in tension generated within your tissues by a pulsed electrostatic field, helping to soothe tissues from the inside out without applying heavy pressure.	Hernández Tápanes et al., 2018
Extracellular Matrix (ECM) Remodelling Everyday translation: Structural tissue rebuilding The biological process of rebuilding the supportive scaffolding around your cells. In lipoedema, this scaffolding remodels in a way that can lead to tissue congestion and tightness.	Duhon et al., 2022
Glycaemic Peaks Everyday translation: Blood sugar spikes Quick, sharp rises in your blood sugar levels after eating refined carbohydrates. These can trigger insulin spikes and contribute to tissue swelling and inflammation.	Di Renzo et al., 2021
Gynoid Adipose (Female-Pattern Fat) Everyday translation: Lower-body fat Subcutaneous fat that naturally settles on the hips, buttocks, and thighs. Unlike abdominal fat, lower-body fat acts as a "metabolic shield" that supports heart health. Lipoedema specifically targets these areas.	Torre et al., 2018
Hypersensitive Tissue State Everyday translation: Tender, easily bruised skin A tissue presentation characterised by subcutaneous low-grade inflammation, extracellular matrix fragility, and hyperactive nociceptors (pain receptors). This results in intense pressure sensitivity, mechanical tenderness, and a granular ("pebbly") subcutaneous texture on palpation.	Dal'Forno-Dini et al., 2025 Herbst et al., 2015 Boisnic & Branchet, 2013
Indurated Tissue State Everyday translation: Firm, stiffened tissue An advanced tissue state where chronic low-grade inflammation triggers dense subcutaneous tissue thickening and pathological fibrosis. Connective tissue fibres lose their natural elasticity and form hard, palpable nodules that restrict joint range of motion and joint compliance.	Faerber et al., 2024 Dal'Forno-Dini et al., 2025 Hernández Tápanes et al., 2018
Johnsen-Rahbek Effect Everyday translation: Electrostatic attraction The biological science behind Deep Oscillation® therapy. A gentle electrostatic field creates a rhythmic "attraction and release" effect between the therapist's vinyl-gloved hands (or applicator) and your skin.	Hernández Tápanes et al., 2018

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Lipo-lymphoedema Everyday translation: Secondary fluid buildup A secondary buildup of fluid that happens when otherwise healthy lymphatic pathways are squeezed or stressed by heavy lipoedema tissue or extra weight. It is not an inevitable stage of the condition.	Shavit & Wollina, 2018 HSE Consensus Guideline, 2026
Macrophage Polarisation Everyday translation: Overactive immune cells A process where your body's protective immune cells switch into an overactive, inflammatory state. This can drive chronic, low-grade tissue inflammation and changes in fat tissue.	Duhon et al., 2022
Nociceptors Everyday translation: Pain-sensing nerves Specialised nerve endings in your tissues that send pain signals to your brain. Low-grade tissue inflammation can make them highly sensitive, but managing them helps soothe discomfort.	Dal'Forno-Dini et al., 2025
Psychonutrition Everyday translation: Mind-food connection A clinical field that looks at how your food choices affect your emotions and brain health. It helps support patients in managing food-related anxiety and building a balanced, nourishing relationship with food.	Kruppa et al., 2026
Reddit r/lipedema Community Everyday translation: Online peer support A global online forum where women share their real-life experiences of lipoedema, helping to validate symptoms like widespread tissue ache that lie outside rigid clinical checklists.	Reddit r/lipedema
Stemmer's Sign Everyday translation: Skin-pinch test A simple physical test where a practitioner tries to pinch a fold of skin at the base of your second toe. If they can pinch it (negative sign), it points to lipoedema rather than lymphoedema.	Shavit & Wollina, 2018
Tissue Induration Everyday translation: Firm, hardened tissue The physical thickening and stiffening of your under-skin tissues, which can occur when fluid congestion and fibrous networks build up over a long period.	Hernández Tápanes et al., 2018

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Tissue Trophicity Everyday translation: Tissue nourishment The overall state of nutrition and cell health in your tissues. This is closely linked to healthy blood circulation and oxygen flow, which help protect and support your tissue layers.	Boisnic & Branchet, 2013
Waist-to-Height Ratio (WHtR) Everyday translation: Waist-to-height ratio A simple health measurement calculated by dividing your waist size by your height. It is highly recommended over BMI in lipoedema because it measures central health while ignoring limb weight.	Brenner et al., 2023
Waist-to-Hip Ratio (WHR) Everyday translation: Waist-to-hip ratio A comparison of your waist and hip sizes. In women, a lower score (under 0.70 to 0.75) shows that tissue is concentrated in the lower limbs, helping clinicians assess lipoedema.	HSE Consensus Guideline, 2026