NHS
Suffolk and North East Essex

How to wear and care for your Compression Garment

For completion by a healthcare professional

The healthcare professional caring for your lower limb has recommended that you wear compression. This is due to:

- Venous Leg Ulcer/s☐
- Being at risk of leg ulceration in the future ☐
- Lymphoedema ☐
- Other (Please State): ☐ _____

There are many different types of compression garments, the type may differ from person to person, this is to ensure it is best suited to your lifestyle. The compression that you have been prescribed is:

_____

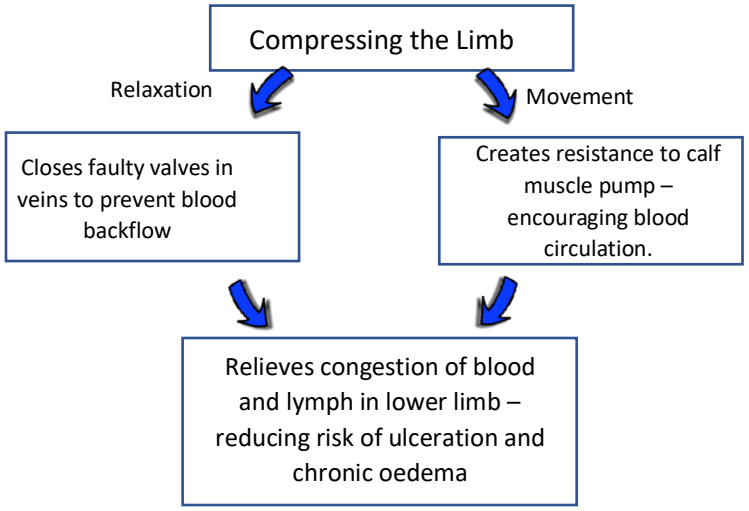
If you have any concerns about your legs or garments, the contact details are _____

Why is it important to continue wearing compression?

- To manage your condition and reduce progression of your symptoms, compression should be worn for life.
- To get the maximum benefit, you need to wear your compression garment every day.

Compression needs to be 'firm' or 'tight' but if you experience any numbness, tingling or change to the temperature of your toes then try moving your ankles and wiggling your toes. This usually resolves symptoms, but if it continues then remove the compression and contact your nurse or GP.

How Compression Works…



Tips for Maintaining Healthy Legs

- ✓ **Wear your compression daily**
- ✓ **Pat your skin dry**
- ✓ **Use soap substitutes**
- ✓ **Apply generous amount of emollient immediately after washing and continue even if or when skin improves**
- ✓ **Keep hydrated with water**
- ✓ **Exercise regularly if possible**
- ✓ **Try to maintain healthy lifestyle and diet**

Check regularly for:

- × **Swelling in your ankles that continue when wearing compression**
- × **Redness or itchy ankles**
- × **Any new wound to your legs**
- × **Toes feel cold or numb when wearing your compression**
- × **Repeated infections in your legs**
- × **Any concerns you have about your legs**

Call your nurse for a review if you have any of the above.

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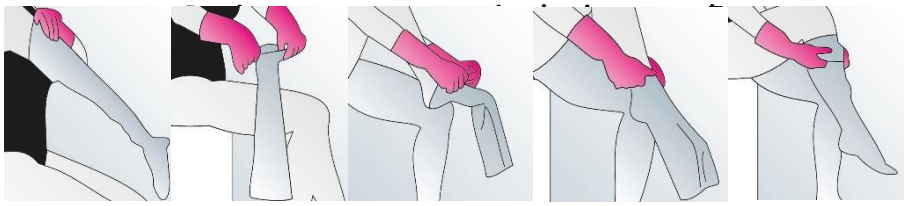
Approved for use by the SNEE Integrated Medicines Optimisation Sub-Committee (IMOC)

Applying and Removing your Garment

Your healthcare professional will demonstrate how to apply and remove your compression garment and make sure it fits correctly and is comfortable for you.

It is recommended that compression is removed at bedtime and put back on first thing in the morning. Though if this is not possible, it can be worn continuously for a maximum of 7 days.



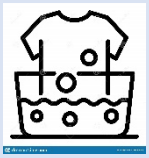
1. Reach into the stocking and grasp the heel
2. Turn the compression stocking inside out at the heel
3. Pull the compression stocking over your foot to the heel and lift the fabric over your heel
4. Use both hands to grasp the material that is hanging down and distribute the fabric evenly over your calf and up to your knee
5. Ensure any creases or wrinkles are smoothed out

Top Tips to aid Application

- **Use rubber gloves, such as gardening or washing up gloves**
- **Ensure smooth, filed fingernails, and remove protruding jewellery to prevent damage to garment**

Some people may wish to purchase an Application Aid to support application of their hosiery or sock. Please discuss this with the healthcare professional to get information on recommended aids to purchase.

Images from Medi [Donning compression stockings: How to do it]



How to Care for your Compression Garment

You will be provided with 2 garments per leg, so that one can be worn whilst the other is being washed.

The life of a garment can be prolonged by correct washing.

Always read the care instructions that come with your garment

- Hand wash at about 40˚C
- Do not use fabric softeners or bleach
- Do not tumble dry or iron and dry away from direct heat
- Close the fasteners of the wrap compression device prior to washing

Replacing your compression garment

All types of compression garments need to be replaced every 6 months. It is recommended that you are remeasured for garments every 6-12 months to ensure they fit correctly. This can be arranged by contacting your GP Surgery.

If you find your garment is causing any discomfort or is ill-fitting, you may need to be remeasured sooner.

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