

Instructions Before Lower Extremity Surgery

You are scheduled to have surgery on your lower limb. After surgery, you will need to keep your leg elevated, restrict activity and wear a compression stocking (or ace wrap) to allow for proper healing. Wounds on the lower limbs take much longer to heal than other parts of the body.

Before Surgery

Buy a pair of knee-high compression stockings (20-30 mm Hg). Bring them to your appointment. You will wear them for 2 months after surgery. You can purchase these at your local pharmacy, or online from Amazon, Bright Life Direct, or Ames Walker.

How to Measure Stocking Size

Look on the package for the correct size and follow these tips:

- Measure first thing in the morning.
- Measure around your ankle at the narrowest point.
- Measure around the widest part of your calf.
- Measure the length from the floor to the crease behind your knee.

We can also refer you to UW Health Care Direct CareWear to have stockings custom fitted. These require a prescription. Medicare **does not** pay for them in most cases. If you have another insurer, call and ask about coverage. Let us know if you want an order placed. Once this is done, you would need to call 608-262-2609 to set up

an appointment at the Middleton or East Clinic location. It takes about 4-6 weeks to be seen. You can also use an ace wrap if you cannot get these stockings. If you have been told that you have arterial impairment of the lower extremities, you are not a candidate for compression stockings.

Activities

Your activity will be very limited during the first 2 weeks after surgery. You will spend most of the time with your leg elevated (e.g. in a recliner or on a sofa). You may get up for brief periods of time (10 minutes per hour) to go to the bathroom or kitchen. You will slowly increase standing or walking each week until you are back to normal activity. This can take about 6 weeks. Healing time varies based on wound location, size, and overall health.

You may need to be off work for one or more weeks. This will depend on your job. You also may need someone to help with household jobs. Returning to your normal routine too fast, can cause infection, scarring, wound opening, or delayed healing.

Who to Call

UW Health West Clinic
(608)263-6226, option 4
UW Health East Clinic
(608) 265-1288, option 4
UW Health Care Direct CareWear
(608) 262- 2609

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright ©8/2020. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7554