

Compression Stockings - Burn and Wound Clinic

Compression stockings help your veins work by putting mild pressure on your legs. This helps control the swelling in your legs. The special knit of a compression stocking has a “massaging” effect. It helps your vein valves work to improve the return of blood to your heart. Controlling the swelling in your legs will be crucial to the complete healing of your wounds and preventing future wounds.

Measuring and Fitting

Compression stockings are measured to give you a proper fit and provide the correct amount of compression. If you have had a weight loss or gain, you may need to be measured again. Please notify the fitter if this is the case. A stocking that fits too tightly will cause numbness, tingling, and sometimes pain. If any of these symptoms occur, remove the garment right away and call your fitter or the clinic. A stocking that is too loose will have wrinkles and will be of little benefit to you. Inform the fitter if you think your stockings do not fit.

Wear and Care

It is a good idea to have two sets of stockings so that a clean set is always ready to wear.

Your stockings should be worn at all times (unless you have been told something else by your provider). Consider applying non-skid footwear or socks and shoes over your compression stockings. This will prevent breakdown of the stockings.

Stockings should be taken off each day to check the skin on your legs and for washing. If your stockings are off for long periods of time, you must be in bed with your feet raised to prevent swelling.

Washing

- Wash stockings daily in warm water with mild soap.
- **Do not** use bleach, fabric softeners, or delicate washing products such as Woolite®.
- Rinse well with warm water. Using warmer water helps create better fabric “memory” so your stockings retain their shape and support.
- Squeeze to remove excess water.
- **Do not** twist or wring.
- Lay flat or hang to dry.
- **Do not** machine dry unless it’s on “Air Dry” cycle.

Reordering

Stockings that have holes, tears, or are stretched out should be replaced. They will not provide enough compression which can result in increased swelling and new wounds. The lifespan of your compression stockings, when changing between 2 pairs, is about 6 months when worn daily. You will need to keep track of the age of your stockings. This may be done by writing the date you begin using them on the tag of the stocking with permanent marker. You may also write the date in your calendar when you need to re-order (every 6 months unless you are told otherwise).

It is important to order new stockings correctly. If you wait until your swelling increases, your new stockings will not fit properly.

Call the Burn/Wound clinic to re-order at 608-264-8040. You may need to schedule an appointment so that clinic staff can ensure the accuracy of your garment measurements. If you receive stockings in the mail that do not fit or are defective, they may be returned and replaced. Most companies do this free of charge if told of the problem within 7-10 days.

It Is Up to You!

If you wear the stockings as prescribed, your swelling should be controlled. This will continue the progress of your wound healing and prevent future wounds. Ordering new garments as prescribed will promote continued success.

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 © 5/2023 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#6784