

Guidelines for the use of compression hosiery/stockings

Why do I need compression hosiery/stockings?

Compression hosiery/stockings provide graduated compression to your legs to improve blood circulation, reduce swelling and aching and prevent varicose veins getting worse. They reduce the risk of blood clots (thrombosis) and leg ulcers. They help prevent the development of long-term leg swelling and ulceration in patients who have had deep vein thrombosis.

How do I put on the stockings/hosiery?

1. Gather up the leg section and put on the foot part so that the heel fits perfectly.
2. Gradually ease the stocking up your leg in regular movements taking care not to twist it or pull at the edges.

Things to note:

- The stocking should lie evenly and smoothly without creases.
- Do not overstretch your stocking.
- Never roll the stocking over at the top or you will increase the compression, which could cause circulation problems.
- The stockings need to be close fitting to work.
- Thigh length stockings may need to be worn with a suspender belt or have silicone backing to maintain their position.
- Putting on hosiery may be difficult to get used to. You will need to persevere. If this does not get easier, please get in touch. There are some devices available which can help with putting stockings on.

Wearing your stockings/hosiery

To begin with:

- Get used to the compression hosiery/stockings gradually by wearing for short periods of time as the tension can be uncomfortable to begin with.
- Ensure the foot piece is in place before pulling the hosiery/stockings up and make sure there are no creases.
- Care should be taken when wearing rings and if you have rough fingernails.
- Rubber gloves may help you put on stockings/hosiery. If you have an allergy to rubber you will need to ensure you use non-latex gloves.
- Any red marks should fade after 15 minutes of removing the stockings/hosiery. If they do not fade, please contact the orthotic department for a review appointment and stop wearing the stockings/hosiery.

General wear

You should wear the stockings/hosiery every day. Usually, they should be put on in the morning and taken off last thing at night. If you have been told to do something different by your vascular specialist, you should follow their instructions.

If the size of your legs alters significantly, please contact the department for a review appointment. It may take up to eight weeks to know whether they are helping with your initial problem, so you need to persevere and give them time to work.

If you develop a severe pain in your calf, stop wearing the stocking/hosiery. Seek advice from your GP immediately.

If you have been prescribed stock compression stockings/hosiery, you can get replacements by repeat prescription with your GP.

Eligibility

Your entitlement for stockings/hosiery can vary between patients due to different amounts of compression required. Unless you are exempt, you will have to pay the current agreed prescription charge for your stockings/hosiery. Usually, you are entitled to two stockings/hosiery. In the event of damage, they will be replaced by the NHS if they are unable to be repaired. You will have to pay if you wish to own more than your NHS entitlement. Please contact the department for a quote and advice.

Contact us

Contact the orthotics team on 0300 131 4787 or esh-tr.orthoticsteam@nhs.net. You can find us on Level 3, Conquest Hospital, or Level 2 of Eastbourne District General Hospital.

Consent

Although you consent for this treatment, you may at any time after that withdraw such consent. Please discuss this with your medical team.

Sources of information

British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists (BAPO)
NHS Orthotic Managers Group

Important information

This patient information is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the patient experience team on 0300 131 4784 or esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net.

Hand hygiene

We are committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

Other formats

If you require any of our leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department on 0300 131 4434 or esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:

Philip King, Orthotist

Lesley Baker, Head of Podiatry and Orthotics

The Clinical Specialty/Unit that have agreed this patient information leaflet:

Community Health and Integrated Care

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