

# Compression Therapy

## What is compression therapy?

One of the most important parts of your treatment for venous disease and venous ulcers is compression therapy. Compression therapy uses snug-fitting stockings, wraps, or special pumps to keep pressure on the veins in feet, ankles, and legs. The pressure forces fluid in the legs to move back into the blood vessels. When the swelling goes down, blood vessels get the oxygen and nutrition they need to help heal a venous ulcer.

## What are compression wraps?

Compression wraps are bandages that wrap tightly around the lower leg. These are made to fit snugly to reduce swelling and increase circulation. The pressure is greater at the foot and ankle and decreases as it goes up to the knee. The wraps should be:

- Prescribed by your doctor.
- Fitted properly to your feet and legs.

If you have a wound or ulcer, a bandage or dressing will most likely be applied to your wound before putting on the compression wrap. Once the ulcer is healed, you will start wearing compression stockings.

## What should I know about compression wraps?

Compression wraps will help your venous ulcer heal well. Follow these tips when you wear your wraps:

- Wear your compression wraps as your doctor or nurse tells you.
- Keep your compression wraps dry. When you take a shower, you can cover your wrap with a kitchen-sized plastic garbage bag. In addition to the compression wraps, the following things will help your ulcer heal:
  - Be as active as you can. This helps your veins pump blood to your heart.
  - Don't cross your legs. This cuts off the circulation in your legs.
  - Avoid standing for long periods of time. This can cause your legs to swell.
  - Raise your legs as often as possible. Raise your leg 6 inches above the level of your heart unless your doctor tells you not to.
  - Take your medicines exactly as your doctor tells you.
  - Move your legs often when sitting.

**Type of compression therapy:**

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**Special instructions:**

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**Take the wrap off and call your doctor or nurse if you have any of the following:**

- More pain that doesn't go away.
- More swelling in your toes.
- Purple, white, blue or cold toes.
- Loss of feeling in your feet and/or legs.
- Wrap slips down your leg and causes tight wrinkles around your ankle.

After hours, call the Consulting Nurse Service: Call 24 hours a day toll-free 1-800-297-6877.