

# Compression Stockings

Compression stockings are support stockings that help control swelling. They are used for swelling in your feet, ankles and lower legs. These stockings squeeze the areas where they are applied to prevent the build up of fluid in the tissue.

When there is a build up of fluid, it causes a lot of pressure in your leg and foot that can be very painful. This fluid build up also prevents blood from circulating to the skin surface where your wound is located. As a result, the healing process slows down.

Compression stockings must be put on every morning before you get up for the day. This will stop the swelling before it starts. The stockings should be worn all day. They may be removed at bedtime as long as you sleep lying flat with your feet elevated on one or two pillows to keep your feet higher than your heart.

Please note that compression stockings come in various strengths. Some require a prescription from your doctor for you to get them. Others can be purchased at the pharmacy or medical supply store. Be sure to use the strength of stocking ordered by your doctor. Ask your pharmacist to help you get the right strength if you are not sure.

## **Tips for putting on your stockings:**

- Put the stocking on your foot, gently working a little at a time over your heel.

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- Gently pull the stocking up your leg. Be sure to keep the stocking smooth. Wrinkles or folds in your stockings may irritate your skin.
- Do not pull or tug on your stockings. This may cause holes and runs.
- Remove any jewelry that may snag or catch on the stockings when putting the stockings on.
- Rubber kitchen gloves may help you grip the stockings at your finger tips when working the stockings up the leg.

### **Care of Your Stockings**

- You can wash your stockings in your washing machine if you place them in a hosiery bag and use the gentle cycle with warm water and a mild detergent. Keep them in the hosiery bag to dry them in your dryer on the low setting. Check the care instructions that come with your brand of stockings to see if they recommend a different way to clean your stockings. It is best to follow their instructions so your stockings last as long as possible.
  - Petroleum based ointments and lotions such as Vaseline should not be used around the stockings because these will damage the fibers.
  - Compression stockings often last about 6 months.
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- **Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: [health-info@osu.edu](mailto:health-info@osu.edu).**