

Compression Bandaging



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Why do you need compression bandaging?

In order to overcome the problems associated with your damaged veins and ulceration, your practitioner has prescribed compression bandages. These special bandages apply enough pressure to help the veins do their job better and help your ulcer to heal. There are different types of bandages and your practitioner will prescribe the one most suitable for you. The bandages can be elastic or made of cotton. They are applied over a layer of padding, which cushions your leg.

Research on compression has shown that compression bandaging is more effective at healing ulcers than dressings alone. Your practitioner will be able to tell you more about the particular bandages that have been chosen for you. It is important that you understand why the bandages are applied in the way they are and how you can help.

The bandages will be applied from the base of your toes to below the knee:

- This prevents your foot and the top of your calf from swelling.

The bandages should feel firm (not tight) and allow your ankle and foot to move freely:

- The bandages need to feel firm especially around the ankle to heal the ulcer.

The bandages are applied evenly all the way up to the knee:

- This will give more support around the ankles than the knee due to the smaller circumference of the ankle to support the veins in returning blood to the heart.

You should be able to wear a shoe over the bandages and you must walk as much as possible:

- It is important to wear a good fitting shoe to avoid pushing the bandages out of place on your foot. Trainers may give good support whereas some slippers are poor. Walking with your bandages on will help the treatment.
- Exercise is also important to help your ulcer heal.



Frequently asked questions

How long will my ulcer take to heal in bandages?

This is variable. Some patients heal within a couple of months others take much longer. If you are worried about your progress, discuss this with the person providing your treatment.

Why are these bandages different to others I have used in the past?

Some bandages such as crepe bandages cannot apply the correct pressure required. It is important to use the bandages recommended.

Can I remove the bandages if I want to?

Your bandages must be worn all the time you are up and about. When the bandages are removed it takes only a very short time for the pressure in the veins to build up again which may result in your legs swelling, which will affect your ulcer healing. Your practitioner will advise you on washing your leg or methods to allow you to shower.

What if the bandages are causing pain?

If the bandages cause you pain and discomfort contact the person providing your treatment as soon as possible. If you are unable to contact them to discuss your problem it may be necessary for you to remove your bandages. However, you must contact them as soon as possible.

Will it help if I elevate my leg when sitting?

Yes but your leg and foot need to be elevated higher than your hips.

If you would like this factsheet in another language or format, for example Braille, large print or audio, please call:

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E: communications.helpdesk@cumbria.nhs.uk

Or write to Engagement and Communications
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