

## Department of Haematology

### Patient Information

## Anti-Embolism Stockings for Prevention of Blood Clot

This information is for patients who are at risk of developing a blood clot in the leg(s). It explains why you need the stockings and how to wear them. It also tells you how to look for signs of problems.

### What are anti-embolism stockings?

Anti-embolism stockings are used to encourage blood flow from the leg. They deliver a distributed amount of compression at the ankle and up the leg. The stockings are particularly important in the prevention of deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and pulmonary embolism (PE).

### What size stockings should I wear?

Your nurse will measure your legs to see what size stockings you need. This should be prescribed by the doctor and should not be bought over the counter at the pharmacy. You should have two stockings so you can wash one while wearing the other.

### When should I wear the stockings?

Wear your compression stockings during the day and then take them off before you go to bed. Put them on again first thing in the morning. They are meant to be firm when on as they need to provide a set amount of pressure to your veins.

### How do I put them on?

Check the stocking is not inside out. Insert hand into stocking as far as the heel pocket, firmly grasp centre of the heel pocket and keeping hold of the heel, turn the stocking inside out to the heel area.



As illustrated (A).

Place the stocking over the foot ensuring the heel patch is under the heel.

Grasp the excess stocking at the front of the foot and apply the stocking over the ankle and ease the fabric up the leg avoiding dragging against skin.



As illustrated (B).

Smooth out any excess material causing creases at the foot by pulling the open toe section of the stocking forward.

Ensure the toe area is covered and the open section is comfortably located under the toe area. It is important not to push toes through the open toe area.



As illustrated (C)

Pull up stocking over calf, making sure you smooth out any wrinkles that appear, and that the band at the top is smooth and not rolling over. Make sure the stocking finishes two fingers width down below the back of the knee joint this is important for safe blood flow.

It is **important** not to roll the stocking down the leg or to fold the toe section back on itself. This can reduce the blood flow in the legs and put you at risk of developing a blood clot in the leg.

When sitting, ensure your stockings are not restricting the circulation at the knee.

### **What problems should I look for?**

You will need to check your toes and foot daily for sensation, circulation and movement. Stop wearing the stocking and report immediately to your GP / anticoagulation clinic, if you have:

- discoloured toes (blue/white)
- toes that become cold, painful or uncomfortable
- tingling / pins and needles in your toes
- swelling to your toes
- changes to the skin such as redness, a rash or itching.

### **When do I stop wearing the stockings?**

You should stop wearing the stockings once you resume your normal level of activity.

### **Any questions?**

If you have any questions or would like any more information, please ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist or contact the anticoagulation team on 020 8725 5443.

### **Further information**

You might also find it useful to visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) (type compression stockings into the search bar).

Produced June 2011

Review June 2014

