

How Compression Hosiery can help you?

Compression hosiery are elasticated stockings that give support to your legs. In graduated compression hosiery, the pressure given by the stockings is greater at the ankle and reduces towards your knee. The stockings can be knee-length or thigh-length depending on your condition.

Why do I need compression hosiery?

The veins in your legs carry blood back to the heart. The calf muscles are responsible for pumping the blood through the veins back to the heart. The veins have one-way valves to ensure the blood flows in the correct direction. Damage to the veins and the valves can lead to the blood being unable to get out of the legs and collecting there, instead of being pumped back towards the heart. As a result, the pressure in the veins increases which can lead to the symptoms such as:

- Swelling of the ankles
- Pain in the calf and legs
- Aching in the leg
- An itching or burning sensation in the leg
- Darkening of the skin
- Leg ulcer

Possible causes of poor function of the veins include:

- Varicose veins
- A blood clot in the leg (this is also called deep vein thrombosis (DVT))
- Faulty valves in the veins deep inside the leg causing high pressure in the veins.

What are the benefits of compression hosiery?

By wearing compression stockings, symptoms due to the following conditions can improve:

- Varicose veins
- An open or healed leg ulcer
- Swollen legs due to likes of pregnancy, immobility after you have had venous surgery
- Deep vein thrombosis (blood clot in legs)

Compression stockings apply pressure to your legs, which increases the blood flow in the veins upwards towards the heart.

Risks of compression hosiery

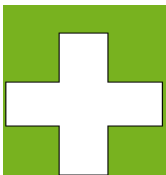
If your leg increases in size and the stockings become too tight, they may cause skin damage. If you lose weight and your legs become thin, the compression stockings may become too loose and may not work. If you get an infection in your leg (cellulitis), your leg may swell up and become hot and painful. If you experience any pins or needles in the feet, numbness, discolouration, reaction to the stockings, shortness of breath or increased pain in the legs, remove the stockings and inform your health professional.

How to apply your compression stockings

Apply compression stockings first thing in the morning, before getting out of bed (before legs begin to swell).

1. Turn the stocking inside out up to the heel. If you are putting on open-toe stockings, place the slipper aid over the foot (slipper aids are provided in stocking box).
2. Pull the foot of the stocking over your foot.
3. Gradually ease the stocking up over the heel and ankle.
4. Ease the rest of the stocking up the leg. Avoid pulling too hard at the top of the stocking.
5. Check toe and ankle pieces are in the correct place:
6. Remove slipper aid from foot.

You must wear your stockings all day but remove them at night.



By Eamonn Brady

Washing and drying your stockings

Washing

Wash in warm water with a non-biological washing detergent. Do not use fabric conditioner. Stockings can be washed in the washing machine on a delicate cycle at 40°C.

Drying

Do not use direct heat (fire or radiator) or a tumble dryer to dry your stockings. This will damage the elastic and the stockings will become ineffective. Roll them in a towel to remove excess moisture. Hang stockings on the washing line to dry.

What class stockings should I wear?

Compression stockings are classed 1-3 with class 1 being the lowest strength.

How often should the stockings be replaced?

With time they will lose their elasticity and will not work as well. Generally, you should have your legs measured again and your stockings replaced every 3-6 months.

Are they allowed on the medical card?

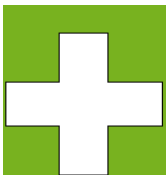
For anyone with a medical card; the HSE allow you receive two free pairs of compression per annum (one every six months) on the hardship scheme once you have a valid prescription from your GP. You only need to pay the standard HSE Medical Card fee of €1 towards the cost of your stocking.

Free measurement and fitting

With appointments available free of charge, Whelehans Compression Hosiery Consultation service provides a dedicated fitting service in our private consultation room a Whelehans Pearse St. Our staff will guide you to ensure that you have the correct stocking and advise how to manage and maintain your hosiery, such as washing, removal, replacement etc. Once the consultation is complete, we will order your hosiery which you can collect the following day. To take advantage of this service, simply call Whelehans Pharmacy on 044 9334591 to book your personal appointment. If you have a medical card, the HSE covers the cost of two pairs of compression stockings per year.

Consult your healthcare professional before making changes advised.

For comprehensive and free health advice and information call in to Whelehans Pharmacies, log on to www.whelehans.ie or dial 04493 34591 (Pearse St) or 04493 10266 (Clonmore).



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