



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive - South

# Compression Bandages Patient Information Leaflet

*Department of Vascular Surgery & Wound Care*



021 – 4920086

Cork University Hospital Group

## What are compression bandages?

Compression bandages are special bandages that your doctor and nurse have prescribed as treatment to heal your venous ulcer.

These bandages work by reducing venous pressure in the leg and helping blood return to the heart. These bandages consist of two, three or four layers which are applied from the toe to the knee. Your doctor and nurse will decide which is the most appropriate bandage to heal your ulcer after examining your leg. Research on compression has shown that compression bandaging is more effective at healing venous ulcers than dressings alone.

## How long do I need to wear the bandage?

The bandage needs to be worn until your ulcer has completely healed.

It is recommended that the initial bandage will be changed after 48-72 hours. Thereafter the bandage will usually be left on for one week. Sometimes for comfort, the bandage may be changed twice weekly. Your leg will usually be washed and moisturised, before the bandages are replaced.

## What do I need to watch for while wearing the bandage?

If you experience any of the following symptoms **remove** the bandage as soon as possible

- Pain
- Numbness
- Pins and needles
- Discolouration of your toes and skin.

**Contact your nurse or the hospital clinic following removal of the bandage.**

## How do I care for the bandage and my legs?

- Wear your compression bandage as instructed.
- Never try to reapply the bandages yourself. Contact your nurse or hospital clinic if the bandage starts to feel loose.
- Never partially remove your bandage. This increases the pressure of the bandage left in place.

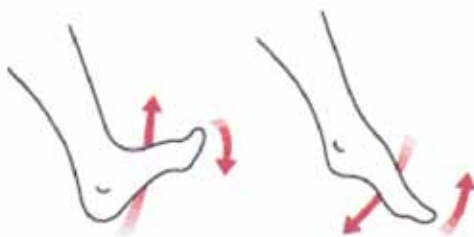
## How do I care for the bandage and my legs? *(continued)*

- Try to avoid getting the bandage wet.
- Wear comfortable well-fitting shoes to avoid pushing the bandages out of place on your foot.
- Your nurse will advise you on washing your leg or methods to allow you to bathe and shower.
- Do not sit too close to open fires or heaters.
- If you are overweight, watch your diet. Losing weight will take the pressure off your legs.
- Avoid standing still or crossing your legs for long periods.
- Walk as often as you can. This will help your circulation.
- When resting, lift your feet and legs above the level of your hips. Support the back of your knees.

## Useful exercises to help your circulation

- Exercise your legs and ankles as much as possible. Try some of the following simple exercises.

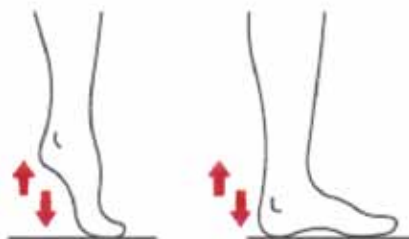
### Sitting & Lying (Flexing the Foot)



### Sitting & Lying (Rotating the Ankle)



### Standing (Moving Up & Down)



## What happens when the ulcer has healed?

- To prevent recurrence of venous ulcers, it is essential to wear compression stockings.
- Check your legs and feet regularly for any cuts or sores.
- If you notice any signs of the ulcer returning, contact your G.P. or public health nurse immediately.
- Walk as much as you can daily

## Contact phone numbers

<b>Vascular Nurse Specialist</b>	<b>087 7709335</b> <b>021-4920086</b>
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<b>Tissue Viability Nurse Specialist</b>	<b>021-4922440</b>
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## Acknowledgements:

**Smith and Nephew**  
**Activa Healthcare**



## Notes

A series of 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

