



### Leg Swelling and Compression Stockings

There are many medical causes for leg swelling. Regardless of the cause, leg elevation is important. Leg elevation promotes venous return and decreases the fluid from pooling in your legs. To elevate your legs, you must elevate your feet above the level of your heart which is best accomplished by using a good recliner chair or lying down on a couch or bed. To begin trying to change your habits: watching television, reading, talking on the telephone or doing paperwork are all good times to elevate. Walking is generally good for leg swelling; however, avoid sitting or standing for prolonged periods of time. When sleeping, try to elevate legs by placing a wedge under your mattress or placing blocks under the foot of your bed.

Compression stockings are also used to help control swelling in your legs. Your Doctor can provide you with a prescription for compression stockings as well as a list of medical supply vendors who are trained to provide proper fit of your stockings. You may check with your insurance company to see if they cover stockings for medical use.

Compression stockings come in knee high, thigh high or panty hose. Select the stocking you know you will wear. Your legs will not benefit if your stockings are in your drawer and not on you! Stockings usually last 3-6 months before you'll need a new pair. If you find them easy to put on, it's often time for a new pair.

Compression stockings should be worn every day. They should be the first item of clothing you put on and the last one you take off. When you first wake up, take your shower. Completely dry your legs. Sometimes using a light sprinkle of baby powder may help make the stockings slide on easier and keep your skin dry. Place your stockings on first. The longer your legs are down, the harder it will be to put them on. Initially, you may only be able to wear your stockings a couple hours, increasing the hours you wear them each day. You may notice your stockings wrinkle, especially around your ankles. Take a minute to adjust them. The stockings should be the last item you take off at night prior to going to bed. If your skin is dry, apply a moisturizer such as Aquaphor at night.

Some patients have a difficult time putting on their stockings. Some patients find wearing rubber gloves help them grip the stockings easier. Other patients find putting on a thin silk sock or stocking liner first helps the compression stocking slip on easier. There are several stocking assist devices to help you apply your stockings. You should inquire about such devices prior to purchasing your stockings from your vendor. It may take you a few weeks to get used to your stockings. You will find your legs feel and look better over time. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to call the office at (631) 246-8289.