

An illustration of a middle-aged man with glasses and a green long-sleeved shirt sitting in a blue armchair. He is using a metal footrest with a wooden base to support his right leg. The background is a simple blue sky and brown floor.

**medi**

## Supported Self-Care for venous and lymphoedema conditions



## Blood circulation

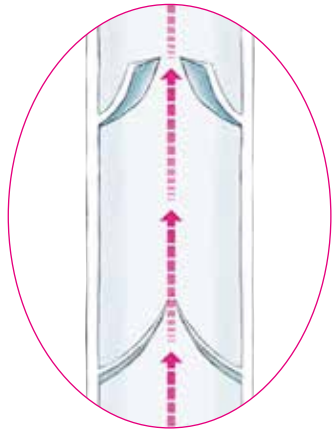
Our body is supplied with blood via a network of vessels known as arterial and venous circulation. Blood in the legs has to be pumped against gravity to get back to the heart. Problems can arise when the leg veins don't pump blood as well as they could. This booklet provides information about what signs and symptoms to look for to keep your legs in the best condition.

**This booklet is for information purposes only.**

It is not intended to replace the advice of a healthcare professional.



Helpful hints throughout the book

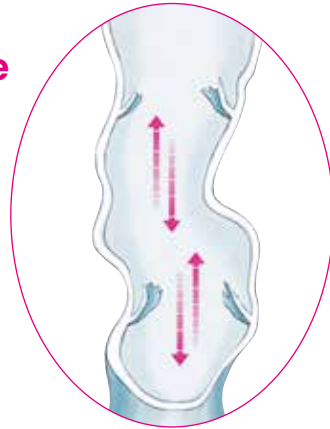


### What a healthy vein looks like

Healthy veins contain valves that prevent the blood flowing back down to your feet. Moving your feet and toes makes your calf muscles flex, squeezing the veins and pumping blood up to the heart.

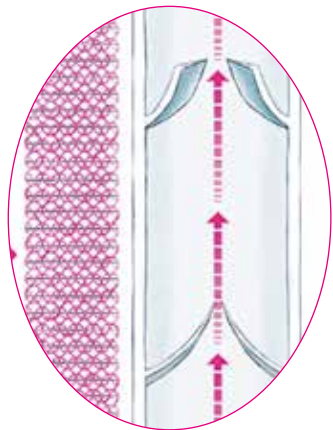
### What an unhealthy vein looks like

In an unhealthy vein, the valves are damaged which means some of the blood flows backwards towards the foot leading to the veins in the leg becoming swollen. This is what causes venous disease.



### How compression hosiery helps

Medical compression garments can help improve circulation if you are diagnosed with venous problems.



### Some conditions that affect the venous circulation:

- **Varicose veins**  
Veins which become large and visible through the skin
- **Deep vein thrombosis**  
Known as DVT or blood clot, it forms within veins often in the leg
- **Phlebitis**  
An inflamed vein near the surface of the skin usually following a blood clot
- **Chronic venous insufficiency**  
When long term venous conditions have not been treated and other signs become apparent (eg. in colour of the skin below the knee and above the ankle compared to the other leg or a wound that doesn't heal).



**All venous conditions respond well to compression therapy**



# Signs and symptoms of venous disease

Recognising the signs and symptoms of venous disease means treatment can start early helping prevent your vein condition getting worse.



General ache



Dry itchy skin



Puffy feet and ankles



Varicose veins



Non healing open wound



Area of darkening skin colour or if you have a dark skin tone, a difference in colour in comparison to the other leg

# I have a wound on my leg

An open wound on your leg that has not healed in 2 weeks often happens because of long term untreated venous disease leaving the skin fragile and the leg or foot puffy due to fluid build-up. If the leg is knocked or scraped, the skin can break causing a wound to develop.



If you notice a wound isn't healing speak to your nurse - the sooner it can be treated, the better

## Signs of venous disease:

### Puffy Feet and Ankles

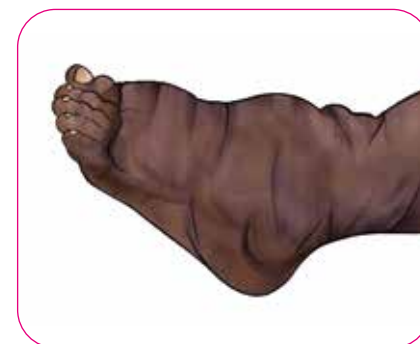
If your legs or ankles are swollen at the end of the day this could be a sign of damaged veins. The veins haven't been able to return all the blood back to the heart and pressure has built leading to puffiness. Skin becomes fragile and a wound can develop.

### Darkening Skin Colour

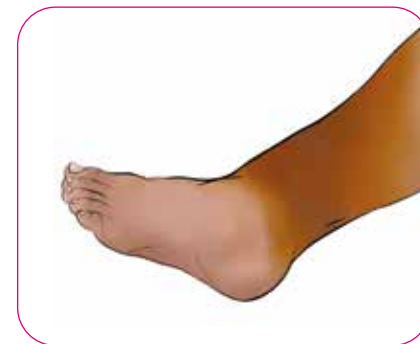
If veins are damaged and not working efficiently fluid can leak from the vein due to pressure and change the colour of your leg skin. If you have a dark skin tone this could be in comparison to your other leg.

### Dry Itchy Skin

If veins are damaged and not working efficiently fluid can leak from the vein due to the pressure build-up drying out the skin causing it to become flaky and/or itchy.



Puffy Feet and Ankles



Darkening Skin Colour



Dry Itchy Skin

# Risk factors:

## Overweight

Being overweight causes an increase in leg vein pressure making it more difficult for the blood to flow back to the heart.

## Mobility

Keeping mobile helps your calf muscle pump blood out of your legs towards your heart. Standing or sitting still for long periods increases the pressure in your ankles and vessels leak fluid into the tissue under the skin which results in puffy ankles/feet especially at the end of the day.



Swimming is a great exercise as pressure around the legs and ankles when you're in the water is high so it's like you're wearing compression hosiery!



## Age

Mobility and general health can decline as we age.

## Previous surgery or injury

Veins may have been damaged during surgery or as a result of injury.

## Intravenous drug use

When recreational drugs are injected into muscle it can result in skin, muscle and circulation damage.





# Why is my leg wound not healing?

There are a number of things that can slow a leg wound healing including:

## Smoking

Cigarette smoke contains chemicals including nicotine and carbon monoxide which makes it harder for veins to work efficiently reducing the amount of blood that can reach the skin.

## Arterial disease

If you smoke and have high cholesterol you may be at risk of arterial disease. This needs to be ruled out as a cause of your leg wound before compression therapy starts.



Spinach, carrots, broccoli, garlic and Brussels sprouts are the top 5 most nutrient rich vegetables



## Diet

A well-balanced diet ensures you're receiving all the nutrients and vitamins needed to encourage healing as well as reducing the risk of obesity.

## High cholesterol

If you have high cholesterol, fatty deposits can build up in the arterial veins restricting flow from the heart to the legs and feet.

## Lack of daily exercise

Being physically active is essential for your circulation and any form of movement or exercise helps.



## Pre-existing medical condition

Diabetes, arthritis and heart disease along with other health conditions can slow wound healing. Discuss with your nurse so that you have the right support.

# Keeping your wound clean

Cleaning at assessment and each dressing change is needed to help make sure that sloughy tissue or wound debris doesn't stop the wound from healing. UCS® Debridement Cloth (pictured below) is ready to use and contains a unique mix of ingredients that remove bacteria, moisten, soothe and help the healing process.



## How to use the UCS® Debridement Cloth in 4 easy steps:

- 1 Open the sachet and take out the pre-moistened UCS® sterile cloth
- 2 Use the cloth to clean the wound with a gentle polishing motion
- 3 Allow the solution to dry on the skin, do not wash or towel off
- 4 Once you have cleaned the wound the other side of the cloth can be used to clean and moisten surrounding skin

### It's important that you:

- Only use the cloth once
- Do not use the same cloth for both legs
- Use the cloth exactly as you have been shown by your nurse

For larger wound areas you might be asked to use the UCS® Debridement Glove which works in just the same way as the cloth.



# Skin health



Did you know that the skin is your body's largest organ? It's a barrier to infection, regulates body temperature, protects internal organs and allows you to touch and

detect sensations such as pain, heat and cold. It's important and needs looking after as part of a daily routine.



## Washing Tips

- Carefully wash skin with a moisturising, soap free product as soap can dry or irritate the skin
- Wash between toes and any skin folds drying thoroughly to avoid fungal infections
- Pat dry rather than rub



## Moisturising Tips

- Use unscented products to reduce irritation
- Moisturise daily and apply lotion liberally in a downwards motion
- Let the moisturiser be absorbed before putting your compression hosiery on

## Signs of a Possible Infection:

- Legs feel hot, the skin is tender and/or are swollen (more than usual)
- You have flu-like symptoms and/or a temperature
- There is an increase in the amount of fluid or a change in colour from your wound
- Your wound smells bad



**Be aware of what is normal for you and if you have any concerns contact your nurse**

# Ankle Brachial Pressure Index (ABPI) screening



Your nurse will take an ABPI measurement which is a quick and easy way to check the blood flow to your legs and feet. It's taken by checking the blood pressures in your arms and legs and then comparing them to see if there is anything slowing your blood flow which might suggest Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD). The ABPI measurement is taken to rule this out and decide what level of compression you need.



The MESI ABPI MD TS machine takes the measurement in a couple of minutes with no prior resting period needed and as it's portable you may be tested at home or in clinic.

## What should I expect during the test?

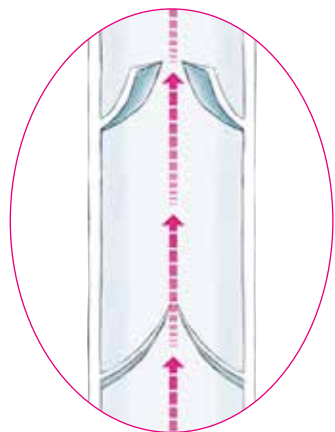
- Blood pressure cuffs will be placed on your arms and legs
- You will be asked to lie flat and be as still as you can for approx. one minute
- Once the test is taken, you can sit up while the results are calculated



Wear lightweight clothes so there's no need to undress before testing

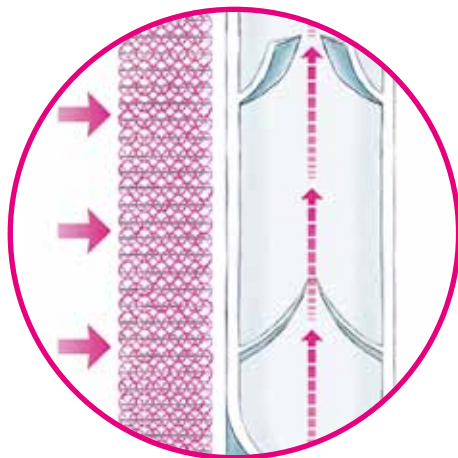
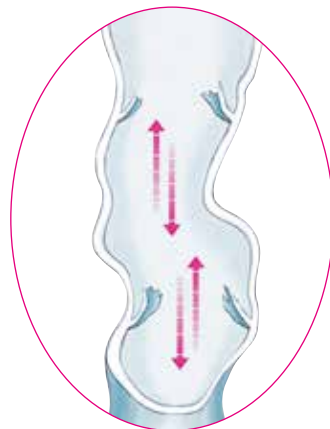
# Compression Therapy

## The positive effects of a compression stocking



Healthy functioning vein along with the calf muscle pumps blood out of the leg towards the heart.

When vein valves aren't working correctly, blood can pool in the ankle which is known as venous hypertension causing further damage in the legs over time.



**Medical compression works with the muscle pump to improve circulation and reduce venous hypertension.**



Before seeing your nurse note down any questions you have to remind you of what you want to ask. There's space at the back of this booklet





## There are 4 types of medical compression stockings you may be asked to use:

### duomed soft® and duomed® soft 2easy®

You may be asked to wear a gentle compression prior to an ABPI assessment or for early intervention if experiencing general leg ache or puffy ankles. These stockings offer light compression and are available as a one or two piece option in both closed and open toe.



duomed® soft 2easy® is especially helpful if you find putting on or taking off compression hosiery difficult.



### mediven® ulcer kit

If you have a small to medium sized leg wound you may be prescribed an ulcer kit system. The mediven ulcer kit provides a therapeutic dose of compression 24 hours a day.

The white ulcer stocking has been designed to wear over a dressing and when you are in bed. The silky feel of the white layer helps make application of the top layer easier.



## juxta®

juxta wraps can be used over any type of dressing, any size leg ulcer as well as leaking/wet legs.

Having an interlocking strap action makes them easy to adjust as necessary without removing the entire wrap.



juxtafit BPS card

They are easy to put on, set the correct compression levels using the BPS card as prescribed and adjust as needed.

## mediven® hosiery

To reduce the risk of your venous leg ulcer returning or venous disease getting worse you will need to wear compression hosiery for life.



### Washing instructions:

mediven hosiery can be machine washed at 40°C with a gentle detergent. Do not use fabric conditioner and dry either on cool in a tumble dryer or line dry

# I have a swollen leg



Swelling can develop in untreated venous disease or if your lymphatic system doesn't work properly.

Our lymphatic system helps to balance the body's tissue fluid, so if it doesn't work well, fluid can build-up (usually) in the legs. This is known as chronic oedema or lymphoedema. Some people are born with lymphoedema when the swelling (anywhere in the body) can be present at birth. Swelling that develops later in life can be due to surgery, injury or infection and it's important your nurse understands

the cause to offer the correct treatment.

Like venous disease, compression can help improve the condition, particularly the shape and size of your legs and reduce the risk of infection. Medical compression must be worn daily to manage and control the swelling.

# Daily care of a swollen leg



**Daily care of a swollen leg includes:**

**Wearing your prescribed compression daily** making sure your skin is well looked after (**see Skin Health for tips pages 16-17**).



Keeping mobile and exercising as much as you're able (**head to pages 38-39 for ideas**).



# juxtafit<sup>®</sup>



**juxtafit can reduce the size and improve the shape of your limb.** You may be prescribed a juxtafit adjustable wrap to reduce your limb volume. The juxtafit wrap includes a Built-In Pressure System (BPS) card so that you can check your leg is receiving the correct level of compression that your nurse has prescribed. The wrap is simple to adjust and fit.



Your nurse may decide you should continue to use the juxtafit wrap once your leg has reduced in size or you may be prescribed mediven<sup>®</sup> mondi<sup>®</sup> or mediven<sup>®</sup> cosy which is flat knit compression hosiery.

# mediven<sup>®</sup> cosy and mediven<sup>®</sup> mondi<sup>®</sup>

**Once your leg has reduced you will be prescribed flat knit compression hosiery.**



▶ The mediven mondi<sup>®</sup> and mediven<sup>®</sup> cosy are flat knit made to measure fabrics which are knitted specifically for swollen limbs.



The garment your nurse prescribes will be made to measure using your exact measurements so it fits perfectly and delivers the level of compression you need. You will need to wear your compression hosiery for life to prevent the swelling from returning.

# Putting on and taking off

There are a couple of different aids that can help to put on and take off your compression hosiery. Any concerns you might have can be talked through with your nurse to make sure you feel confident to do this yourself.

## medi Butler

This sturdy frame allows you to step inside the garment and ease it up your leg. It has long handles so reduces the need to bend.



**Follow the step  
by step guide  
on page 32–33  
for how to use  
the medi Butler**



## How to use the medi Butler

### Step one.

Stand the medi Butler on a firm surface. With the heel of the stocking towards you turn the top of the stocking over the frame.

### Step two.

With both hands gently slide the stocking down the frame until you can see the heel of the stocking.



### Step three.

Place the medi Butler on the floor.



### Step four.

Tilting the frame towards you put your toes into the opening and push your foot through into the stocking.

### Step five.

Using the handles slide the stocking up towards the knee.



### Step six.

Once the stocking is just below the knee you can release the medi Butler and adjust your stocking by hand into place.





# medi 2in1

how to  
use to **put**  
**on** your  
hosiery



The medi 2in1 is a silky material aid that can be used for all lengths of stockings and tights.



## Step one.

Lay the medi 2in1 flat on the floor in front of you and fold along the dotted line.

## Step two.

Place your bare foot on the footprint.



## Step three.

Gently push the material between your toes to secure.



## Step four.

Guide the stocking over the foot. The medi 2in1 will assist the stocking over the heel.



## Step five.

Pull the stocking up your leg towards your knee.



## Step six.

Gripping the part of the medi 2in1 that is hanging out of the top of the stocking, lift your heel slightly and pull to release the medi 2in1. Adjust the topband of your stocking comfortably into place.

how to  
use to **take  
off** your  
hosiery

## medi 2in1



### Step one.

Lay the medi 2in1 flat on the floor.

### Step two.

Slip your foot into the closed end as far as it will go.



### Step three.

Pull your stocking down to the top of the medi 2in1. Fold the top band of the stocking down over the medi 2in1.



### Step four.

Now you can pull the stocking down over your heel towards your toes with ease.



### Step five.

Your stocking has now been removed.

# Movement and exercise



It's important to be as active and mobile as possible to improve the blood flow in your legs. When active the muscles in the legs assist the blood circulation and by moving and gently

exercising it will help heal your leg wound as well as easing other symptoms such as swelling and stiffness. Moving more each day in ways that work for you can make a big difference.

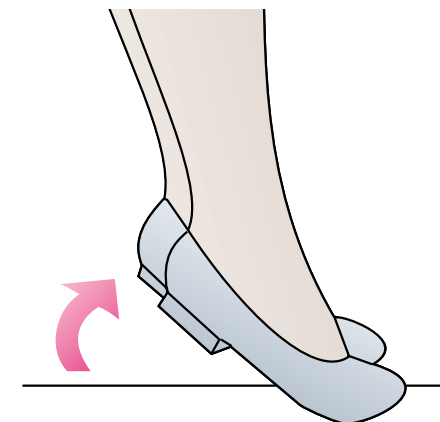
If you're able to manage light to moderate exercise, aim to walk for 30 minutes at least three times a week. If walking isn't an option there are some gentle chair based exercises that you can do daily which will help with blood flow. Make sure to wear your compression whether you're out walking or following these chair based exercises.

## Chair based exercises:

**Step one.** Roll your feet to the right, then left and then in opposite directions



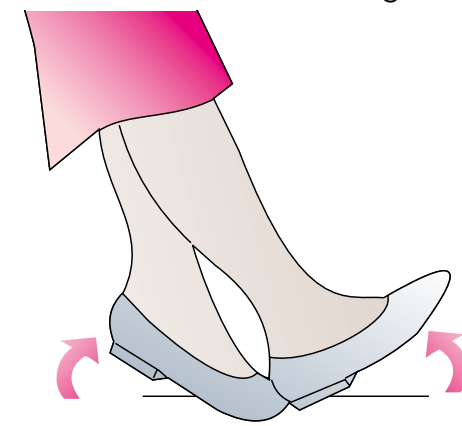
**Step two.** Lift your heels and lower



**Step three.** Pull your toes towards you and lower



**Step four.** Roll your feet from heel to toe and back again



## Aftercare

Although your wound may have healed or your swelling reduced, the underlying condition remains and it's important you do everything you can to keep your legs in good condition. Ensure you continue to wear the compression hosiery prescribed for you as well as including movement, skin care and a well-balanced diet into your daily activities. If you smoke, stop. Your nurse can advise of smoking cessation clinics in your area.



Your nurse will advise if there is a 'well leg' clinic or similar in your area and if possible, will arrange a follow-up appointment. **However, do not wait for this appointment and contact your nurse if you experience any of the following:**

- **Break in the skin**
- **Change in foot colour**
- **Leg pain/cramp when walking or at night**
- **Excessive itching or eczema develops**
- **Swollen feet, legs or ankles**
- **Hot, painful or inflamed area develops on the lower leg**





# Notes

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