Wrapping the Leg after Surgery to Remove Melanoma

Your leg was wrapped after your surgery to reduce swelling and help with circulation. You will meet with a physical therapist that will show you and your caregiver how to wrap your leg. These instructions were created for you to use as a guide on how to wrap your leg.

What should I know about wrapping my leg?

- Remove the bandages each day to check the skin on the foot and leg. Then wrap the leg again.
- Roll each bandage back into a smooth roll to make it easier to handle when you wrap the leg.
- You must wear the bandages after surgery until your appointment with your doctor.
- The bandages you will use are low stretch. Do not use elastic bandages (ace bandage) that are high stretch.
- All bandages should be wrapped just tight enough to stay in place. Do not tug on the bandages or stretch them while wrapping. Wrapping the bandages too tight can cause pain, numbness or tingling in the leg or foot.
- If you have pain, a loss of feeling or tingling in your foot or leg, remove the bandages. Do not put the bandages back on your leg until after the pain, loss of feeling, or tingling is gone.
- Use tape to hold the ends of the bandages in place. Do not use metal clips. To protect your skin from irritation and scratches, do not put tape on your skin. Taping the end of each bandage may help to keep them in place.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

• Each time you start a bandage, change the direction it is wrapped around the leg. For example, if you wrap the first bandage around the leg in a clockwise direction, the next bandage should be wrapped around the leg in a counter clockwise direction.

• You should overlap each bandage about half the width of the bandage.

What supplies will I need?
• Stockinette
• Padding if needed for bony places
• _______ Small bandage(s)
• _______ Medium bandage(s)
• _______ Large bandage(s)
• Tape to secure end of bandage

Directions for wrapping your leg:
1. To put the stockinette on the leg, gather it on your hands like you would to put on a sock and then pull it gently over the foot and up the leg. The stockinette will be long enough to cover the leg from the base of the toes to the upper leg or thigh. **The stockinette should not cover the drain tube.**

2. Pad any bony places as directed by your physical therapist.

3. Begin with the smallest brown bandage and make a wrap around the ankle so you catch the end of the bandage. This is called an anchor wrap to hold the bandage in place.

4. Wrap down and around the foot to the base of the toes.

5. When the foot is covered, wrap the bandage from the base of the toes back towards the ankle. The bandage will end at or near the ankle.
6. Use the medium size wrap and start at the ankle and wrap up the leg. The bandage should overlap about ½ the width of the bandage. End the bandage below the knee.

7. Use the large bandage and start with an anchor wrap below the knee. Cross the bandage behind the knee and make an anchor above the knee. Cross back behind the knee again to below the knee. Use the rest of the bandage to fill in the knee area.

8. Use another large bandage and do an anchor wrap above the knee. Wrap around and up the upper leg to just below the surgical dressing or drain. Based on the length and size of your leg, you may need 2 or more bandages to finish wrapping the leg.

If you have any questions, please call your Physical Therapist:

Name: ________________________________________________________________

Phone Number: ________________________________________________________