Compression Wraps

Compression wraps are bandages that help control swelling. They are most often used for swelling in your feet, ankles and lower legs but they can be used for hand and arm swelling also. Ace bandages are often used for this type of wrap. These wraps squeeze the areas where they are applied to prevent the build up of fluid in the tissue.

When there is a build up of fluid, it causes a lot of pressure in the leg or arm that can be very painful. This fluid build up also prevents blood from circulating to the skin surface where your wound is located. As a result, the healing process slows down.

Compression wraps must be put on every morning before you get up for the day. The wraps must be put on before you have been up so you do not have swelling building in your legs before you get them on. These should be worn all day long. They may be removed at bedtime as long as you sleep lying flat with your feet elevated on one or two pillows to keep your feet higher than your heart.

**How to apply:**

1. Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 15 seconds. Rinse with water and towel dry.
2. Unwrap the compression wrap to remove it. If you have a wound dressing that was under the wrap, change the dressing as directed.
3. Check your wounds for signs of infection. If you have any of these signs, call your doctor or nurse right away:
   - Skin around the wound is more red, swollen, or feels hot
   - Wound smells bad
   - Pus drainage
   - Temperature above 100.5F
4. Check the rest of the skin on your leg and foot for any blisters, red spots, open areas or other signs of problems. If you find any new problems, call your doctor or nurse.
5. Remove the compression wrap from the package or use a clean wrap.
6. Start at the base of the toes and wrap around and up your leg to just below the knee. Put the wrap on so the edges overlap about half of the bandage. This keep the pressure even and prevents bare patches where some of the foot or leg may poke through.
7. Keep the wrap smooth. Any creases or wrinkles in your wraps may irritate your skin. If you need to use more than one wrap to cover your leg, lap the end over each other for about 6 inches and continue to wrap. The ends should hold in place.
8. Wrap so the bandage is snug but not too tight. You should be able to slide a finger under the layers of the wrap.

9. Use the clips or velcro the end of the wrap to hold it in place.

10. Wash your hands again with warm water and soap. Rinse and towel dry.

11. Loosen the wraps if you have pain, numbness or tingling in your toes or feet. If these signs do not ease after you loosen to wraps, call your doctor or nurse.

**Care of your wraps**

- You can wash your wraps in your washing machine if you place them in a hosiery bag and use the gentle cycle with warm water and a mild detergent. Keep them in the hosiery bag to dry them in your dryer on the low setting.

- Certain brands of wraps may last longer if they are washed by hand. Wash them in warm water and squeeze out as much water as you can. Lay them flat to dry on a towel or drying surface. Never wring or hang your wraps to dry. This can stretch the wraps so they will not work.

- Petroleum based ointments and lotions such as Vaseline should not be used around the wraps because these will damage the fibers.

- Compression wraps often last 1 - 2 months.

Once you have healed, your doctor will recommend that you use compression wraps or stockings to keep your swelling under control. This helps reduce the chance of developing a new wound.