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## What is Compression Therapy?


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Typically administered through medical footwear that is known as compression stockings or compression socks, compression therapy involves the application of graduated pressure to improve circulation and generally support veins in the legs and ankles. Although they are effective on their own, physicians often prescribe the use of compression stockings as part of a more comprehensive vein treatment plan.

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## How Compression Therapy Works

Compression therapy can combat and prevent varicose veins and other symptoms of various venous illnesses by gently but firmly squeezing the lower legs. Patients who wear compression stockings also receive palliative benefits such as dramatic reductions in levels of swelling and discomfort.

By adding extra support to the walls of each vein, compression stockings encourage the flow of blood upward back to the heart. This extra support likewise prevents the pooling of blood in the lower extremities, reducing unsightly vein bulging and generally promoting healing in diseased veins.

In order to support effective upward circulation, compression stockings secure the ankles most tightly and then gradually relax pressure as they travel up the legs. The amount of pressure at the top of the calf is approximately 50 to 80 percent what it is at the ankles, and the amount of pressure at the bottom of the thigh is approximately 20 to 40 percent what it is at the ankles.

## When to Wear Compression Stockings

In general, patients should wear compression stockings during active daytime hours that contain a great amount of walking, standing, and sitting upright. When a patient assumes these positions, the force of gravity causes blood to pool in the legs, ankles, and feet.

At night, however, patients should typically remove their compression stockings. While lying in a horizontal position to relax and sleep, the patient should generally allow for the free circulation of blood throughout the body.

What Else Can I do?

Obviously, the long term goal of using compression therapy is to relieve pain and increase your quality of life. Compression therapy alone can not treat the issues that compression therapy is required for - varicose veins and vein disease. Only by addressing larger vein health issues can pain and mobility issues be dealt with.

With this in mind, you can...

- Engage in a reasonable exercise program that works to increase leg strength and venous circulation. Walking 45 minutes daily can have dramatic improvements in cardiac health which in term reduces the chances of venous insufficiency.
- Cease smoking. Vein health is compromised by smoking - nicotine damages and weakens veins and arteries, increasing risk of spider and varicose veins. Consider discussing with your doctor a medically supported smoking cessation program
- Improve your diet - adding more fruits and vegetables, increasing hydration and increasing fiber intake will increase overall health and energy levels. You should include in your diet foods rich in fiber, vitamin C while being low in sodium. This increases collagen levels in veins and keeps them elastic and healthy.


# Compression Stockings as Part of a Larger Treatment Plan

Compression therapy is also a key component of the post-op process in the wake of vein surgery procedures such as sclerotherapy, ambulatory phlebectomy, and endovenous laser treatment. During the healing process, the pressure of regular compression stocking use not only enhances the positive effects of these procedures but helps leg veins overcome the trauma caused by the procedures themselves.

## For More Information


Reach out to us! Call us at 866-639-4109 and we'll be happy to discuss with you your vein health options.

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