

Supply patients with two garments per limb every 6 months  
(One to wear + One to wash)

### How to prescribe compression hosiery

Prescribe hosiery **generically** as 'compression hosiery'

- Select the appropriate **Class** (i.e. Class 1, Class 2 or Class 3)
- Select the appropriate **Length** (i.e. below knee, thigh length)
- If **open-toed** hosiery is required, it must be **specified** (e.g. arthritic/clawed toes, fungal infection, long foot size compared with calf size), otherwise, closed toe will be supplied.
- **Size does not need to be specified** on the prescription: pharmacists can measure patients (also to double-check a given measurement) to ensure the correct standard size is supplied (and will be able to claim a fee for this).
- **Do not include 'made to measure'** on the prescription; the community pharmacy may endorse the prescription if made to measure hosiery is required. In most cases, measurements are likely to fall within the manufacturer's standard sizes and the costs associated with these products are much greater

e.g. **Compression hosiery, Class II, thigh length, open toe**

### Which class?

<b>Class 1:</b> 14 – 17 mmHg	superficial varicose veins and varicose veins during pregnancy
<b>Class 2:</b> 18 – 24 mmHg	varicose veins of medium severity, mild oedema, treatment and prevention of recurrence of leg ulcers and varicose veins during pregnancy
<b>Class 3:</b> 25 – 35 mmHg	gross varicose veins, gross oedema, post-thrombotic venous insufficiency and treatment and prevention of recurrence of leg ulcers

### How many? How often?

- Prescribe **two stockings per limb** so patient has **one to wear** while the other **one is washed** and dried
- Each stocking should last approximately 100 washes; therefore patients should **replace them twice per year**. Stockings should be hand washed at about 40°C (a comfortable hand temperature) and dried away from direct heat

<b>ONE</b> limb affected	Prescribe TWO garments every 6 months
<b>TWO</b> limbs affected	Prescribe FOUR garments (i.e two pairs) every 6 months

## Medicines Management Team Advisory Summary

### Reviews

It is usually recommended to review these patients every 3 - 6 months

- Reassess the condition for which the stocking is being prescribed.
- Ensure that the person is continuing to wear the stocking successfully and is replacing them regularly.
- Repeat leg measurements to ensure that the stocking continues to be the correct size.

Ideally, Doppler studies should be repeated every 6–12 months or earlier if clinically indicated

### Other considerations

- Note the stocking should be **replaced earlier if any defects** or damage become apparent or, if on stretching, the stocking does not return to its original shape.
- Patients will pay (unless exempt) **one prescription charge PER STOCKING**, not per pair.
- Hosiery **Applicators** are available on prescription to help patients put their stockings on (e.g. Acti-Glide®, Easy-Slide®...).
- Graduated compression hosiery is **remedial rather than curative**, and their use needs to continue for as long as there is evidence of venous disease, which can often be lifelong.
- **Do not prescribe flight socks on the NHS**, patients should purchase.

### Lymphoedema garments - Prescribe by brand

- **Lymphoedema garments are not an alternative to compression hosiery**
- Patients must be assessed by the **Lymphoedema Service**, who should provide the first prescription where possible. Measurements may need to be taken more frequently.
- The same principle '**wear one, wash one**' applies. Most garments can be washed on a gentle machine wash cycle. **See product label.**

### References

1. NICE CKS Compression Stockings available at <http://cks.nice.org.uk/compression-stockings>
2. Telford and Wrekin CCG (2015) *Guidelines for the use and prescribing of compression hosiery.*
3. BNF 72 (Sep – Mar 2017) *Compression and Hosiery Garments*
4. <http://psnc.org.uk/dispensing-supply/dispensing-a-prescription/appliances/>