

For further information about this service contact:

Luton Tissue Viability Team
Luton Treatment Centre
6 Vestry Close
Luton
LU1 1AR

Tel: 0333 405 0048

Well Leg Clinic Information Pack

Tissue Viability Service

If you require this information in a different format such as in large print or on audio tape, or in a different language please contact the service on the details above.

If you have any compliments about this service or suggestions for improvements, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 0300 131 1000 (charges may apply depending on your network) or email: ccs-tr.pals@nhs.net.

For free, confidential health advice and information 24 hours a day, 365 days a year please contact NHS 111.



Tissue Viability Team - who's who?

Janice Little - Tissue Viability Specialist Nurse
Vicki Brookes - Tissue Viability Specialist Nurse
Carly Morrison - Tissue Viability Sister
Caroline Littler - Tissue Viability Sister
Barbara Niblett - Tissue Viability Sister
Sarah Dumbrell - Tissue Viability Sister
Kirsty Hughes - Tissue Viability Sister
Krystina Hatton - Tissue Viability Assistant Practitioner

Clinic days and opening times

Monday	8:30am - 4pm
Tuesday	8.30am - 12noon
Wednesday	8.30am - 4pm
Thursday	8.30am - 4pm
Friday	8.30am - 1pm

Contact Number: Reception – 0333 405 0048

If you need to be seen outside of these times please ring your GP or NHS 111.

Compression hosiery

Compression hosiery application

Pull on method

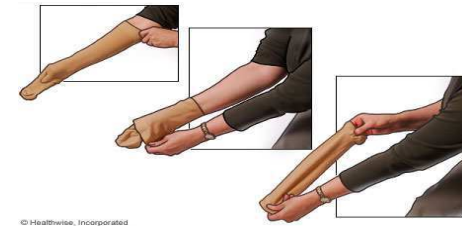
- Grasp the hosiery at both sides of the top of the band.
- Pull onto the foot and up the leg as far as possible.
- Choose a position on the leg where you can grasp the hosiery on both sides again and pull as far as possible. Fold down the leg rather than allowing it to bunch or roll.
- Grasp the hosiery at the top and pull out the fold.
- Repeat until the heel is in place.

Heel Pocket out method (can also be used when a carer is applying the hosiery)

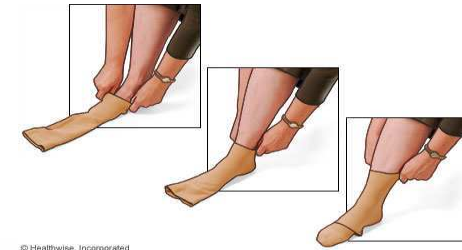
1. Turn your hosiery inside out by putting the foot, grasping the heel and pulling the hosiery inside out



2. Slide your foot into the hosiery until your toe and heel are positioned correctly.



3. Grasp the top of the hosiery and pull up over the calf until its two fingers below the knee.



Smoking

Nicotine from inhaled smoke causes the blood vessels that carry blood to become narrow, therefore reducing the amount of oxygen and essential nutrients required by your body. Smoking also increases the risk of developing vascular diseases including peripheral arterial disease, stroke, heart attack, abdominal aortic aneurysm and subsequent death

Quit smoking

Quitting is the best possible option to reduce the risk of developing further vascular disease.

It is also the best way to start a healthy lifestyle.

If you would like to STOP smoking or are thinking about stopping please discuss with us and/or fill in the smoking cessation form provided for you.

Weight Management

If you are over-weight, then losing weight can help prevent further venous disease because excess weight contributes to high pressure in the leg veins, which can cause damage to the skin. Venous ulcers are much more common among people who are over-weight than in people of healthy weight.

To help with weight loss do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise every week, eat smaller portions and have only healthy snacks between meals. A gradual weight loss of around 0.5kg (1.1lbs) a week is usually recommended.

A low-fat, high fibre diet that includes whole grains and plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables (at least five portions a day) is recommended.

If you would like support on weight management please speak to your healthcare professional.

Care of compression garment

You will need to wear compression garments for life so it is important that you take care of them and wash them regularly.

Ask your healthcare professional for advice and follow the manufacturer's instructions that come with the garment.

- Machine or hand wash your stockings/socks every 2 to 3 days. Check the manufacturers guidelines for the maximum temperature of water that you can use.
- Don't use fabric conditioner as it damages the elastic.
- Don't wring out the stockings/socks as this will damage them
- Leave them to dry naturally as the heat from a tumble dryer may damage the elastic.
- Keep your finger nails and toe nails short
- Wear the hosiery evenly; do not keep a pair for best.

Welcome to the Well Leg Clinic

You have been referred to the Well Leg Clinic by your healthcare professional for an assessment of your lower limbs to prevent any complications arising in the future. This will include:

A detailed medical history

The specialist nurse will gather information about any medical conditions that you have; operations, skin infections, allergies, medication and family medical history. Therefore it would be really helpful if you could bring in a list of any current medication and health history.

Assessing your lower limbs

An assessment of your mobility and ankle movement will determine how effectively the calf muscle pump is working. Blood flow in your limbs is dependent upon the contraction and relaxation of the muscles in your legs. Reduced mobility and limited ankle movement prevents the calf muscle pump from working properly, therefore decreasing the amount of fluid moving up your leg towards your heart.

Assessing the condition of your skin

The condition of the skin on your legs may provide indication of venous or lymphatic disease.

Chronic **venous disease** is a common disorder that affects the veins of the legs. These veins carry blood from the legs to the heart. Normal veins have a series of valves that open and close to direct blood flow from the surface of the legs to the deep leg veins.

If the valves within the veins fail to work properly, blood can flow backwards in the veins and pool in the legs. The pooled blood can increase pressure in the veins. This can cause problems that are mild (such as leg heaviness, aching, dilated or unsightly veins) or severe (such as swelling, skin colour changes, skin rash on the leg, recurrent skin infections and chronic ulcers).

The **lymphatic system** is a network of tissues and organs. It is made up of

- Lymph - a fluid that contains white blood cells that defend against germs
- Lymph vessels - vessels that carry lymph throughout your body. They are different from blood vessels.

Lymph nodes - glands found throughout the lymph vessels. Along with your spleen, these nodes are where white blood cells fight infection.

The lymphatic system clears away infection and keeps your body fluids in balance. If it's not working properly, fluid builds in your tissues and causes swelling, called lymphoedema.

Assessing the circulation

As part of the assessment a Doppler test will be completed to ensure that there is adequate blood flow in your limbs.

You will be asked to rest on a bed to allow your blood pressure to stabilise. Blood pressures will be taken in both arms and both legs whilst listening to the blood flow using a Doppler machine.

The Doppler assessment

Blood moving in an artery or vein causes small echoes and these are used to measure the speed of movement of the blood cells. The sound waves will be amplified through speakers. This allows the nurse to listen to the flow of blood cells to determine whether or not there is normal flow

The results of the test will confirm whether compression bandages / hosiery can be applied. It may be necessary to refer you to a vascular consultant, this will be discussed with you by the nurse.

Assessing the impact on your life.

Lower limb problems can affect mobility, choice of clothing or footwear; this can impact on your quality of life.

The nurse will discuss treatment options with you and to set realistic goals in managing your condition.

Treatment Options

Physical treatment of venous/lymphatic disease comprises one or two phases:

- Compression bandages to reduce swelling, restore a natural limb shape, improve skin condition and enhance quality of life.
- Maintenance to prevent disease progression.

Long term management

It will be necessary to wear compression garments for life to prevent the disease progressing. There are many different options available; hosiery, socks or Velcro systems. The options will be discussed with you; this will enable you to choose the right product.

As well as wearing compression garments you will also receive education and information on maintaining good skin care, exercise, diet, hydration, smoking cessation, weight management and garment care advice.

Depending upon individual circumstances, it may be required for you to wear your compression garment 24 hours a day. The specialist nurse will advise you on when you will be required to wear your garments.

Skin Care

Your skin provides many functions including temperature regulation and protection. It is important to maintain your skin in a healthy condition.

What you can do to help

- Pay particular attention to cleansing.
- Avoid perfumed soaps.
- Dry very carefully paying particular attention to skin folds and between the toes.
- If your skin is dry and flaky regular use of an Emollient/cream is important.
- Bedtime is a good time to apply your emollient if you remove your hosiery at night.
- Try to always wear footwear and avoid walking barefoot.
- Seek advice promptly for any cuts, grazes, blisters or bruises.
- Seek advice promptly if your leg becomes unusually hot or more swollen.
- If your legs become more swollen don't attempt to put on your compression hosiery.
- Try to avoid insect bites, by using a good repellent

****When using cream/emollient apply it in a downward direction from knee to toes****

Evaluation and exercise to improve blood flow

Following an exercise programme can help prevent future deterioration of your lymphovenous disease.

Get yourself in a comfortable position. You might find it easier to these exercises whilst laying on the bed or the settee. It is best to do exercise while wearing your bandages or compression hosiery.

Before exercising your legs do some deep breathing, place your hands on your tummy and breathe slowly in and out five times and feel yourself pushing your hands outwards.

Exercises

Try and do each of the following exercises five times to begin with and increasing gradually. Repeat exercises two or three times per day.

1. Wiggle your toes
2. Move your ankles up and down slowly and as hard as possible and feel the muscle in your calf tighten
3. Circle each ankle anticlockwise, then clockwise
4. Bend and straighten knee
5. Pull toes upwards, tighten thigh muscles and hold for a count of 10 seconds

