Caring for your Bandages or Stockings

- Hand wash your bandages or stockings with warm soapy water. Roll in a towel to remove any excess of water.
- **DO NOT** wash your bandages or stockings in the washing machine or use a dryer.
- Dry your bandages or stockings in an airy place away from direct sunlight.
- All bandages or stockings eventually need to be replaced. Discuss with the nurse how often your bandages or stockings need to be replaced.
- Discuss with your nurse the moisturising cream you need to use as some products may damage your stockings.
- Contact the nurse or the occupational therapist if you gain or lose 5kg as your stockings may need to be refitted.

Please Note: This brochure is a guide only. If you have any concerns or questions after reading this brochure you should talk to your nurse or doctor.

Sydney District Nursing is supported by funding from the Australian & State Governments under the HACC and CCSP Programs. Although funding has been provided by the Australian & State Governments, the material contained herein does not necessarily represent the views or policies of either Government.

When to Call for Advice

- If you have changes in sensation in your feet such as ‘pins and needles’ or tingling and numb feet.
- If your toes are colder or of a different colour than normal.
- If your bandage becomes loose.
- If your foot or leg becomes very painful.
- If you have any questions or concerns about your compression therapy.
- If you are feeling any changes in sensation, pain, colour and temperature CONTACT THE NURSE OR DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
- If they are not available REMOVE YOUR BANDAGES OR STOCKINGS AND GO TO YOUR LOCAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT OR MEDICAL CENTRE.
Why has your doctor ordered Compression Therapy?

- To help improve the blood flow in your legs.
- Compression can reduce swelling, increase oxygen flow to your legs and may assist with healing or preventing wounds.
- Compression Therapy can be either specialised bandages or stockings.

What should you expect?

- Your bandages or stockings will be firm and may be uncomfortable but they should not cause a lot of pain.
- If you have a wound, this will be cared for before the bandage or stocking is applied.
- The nurse will discuss how often your bandages or stockings will be changed.
- After you have healed, you may require specialised stockings to prevent wounds re-occurring.

Stockings

- Wear compression stockings as ordered by your doctor.
- Put on and take off stockings carefully to avoid skin damage or irritation.
- Care for stockings as per the manufacturer’s guidelines.
- The use of a stocking applicator may be of assistance.

Exercise

- Walk as much as possible or as your doctor advises.
- Avoid long periods of standing as this may cause your legs to swell.
- Move your ankles and toes frequently even when resting.
- Avoid crossing your legs or ankles.

Skin care

- Wash your legs in warm water with the recommended cream or a soap free cleanser.
- Carefully dry your legs and apply the recommended moisturising cream.

Elevation

- When seated, elevate your legs as much as possible and as high as comfortable.

Remember

- You may need to wear a larger shoe size when wearing compression bandages or stockings.
- Bandages are not waterproof. You can speak with your nurse about ways to avoid getting them wet when showering.
- Take special care of your feet and keep your toenails short to prevent skin tears and infection.