

Wearing a Compression Garment: What You Need to Know

General Information

Your health care provider wants you to wear a compression garment (stockings or arm sleeves) to help manage your condition.

It is important to wear your compression garment every day. If you do not wear your compression garment, you may not see much improvement in your condition.

The first few times you wear your garment you will notice a “squeeze.” Properly fit compression stockings and arm sleeves will feel snug at first. It will take a few days to adjust to the pressure.

It is OK to begin wearing your compression garment gradually. Try wearing it for just a few hours the first day. Increase the number of hours you wear it each day until you can wear them comfortably all day.

Be sure to check your garment regularly during the day to smooth out any wrinkles. Remove your garment before going to bed.

Tips for Putting on Your Garment

- Compression garments are easier to put on when you first get out of bed before any swelling begins.
- Make sure your skin is dry before putting on your garment.
- Wearing rubber or vinyl gloves will make putting on the garment much easier. They let you grip the fabric easily and let you smooth out the garment with the least effort. Gloves also protect the garment from runs and snags caused by fingernails and jewelry.

- Avoid rolling, gathering or bunching the fabric. This will increase the pressure.
- Apply moisturizer or lotion to your legs or arms in the evening before you go to bed, instead of in the morning when you put your garment on.

How to Care for the Garment

Put the garment in a mesh bag. Set your washer to the delicate or gentle cycle (in warm water). Do not use bleach or fabric softener. Use a mild detergent. You may also wash the garment by hand.

To dry, place the garment on a towel and press firmly until almost dry. Do not put the garment in the dryer. Hang the garment to dry.

Wash the garments about every 2 to 3 days (when they look soiled or lack their elasticity). Washing the garment helps make the fabric elastic again.

When to Replace Your Garment

The elastic fibers of your compression garment will break down with wear. You will need to replace your garment about every 3 to 6 months. As a general rule, if your garment becomes easy to put on, it probably needs to be replaced.