

## Applying Elastic Stockings

1. Elastic stockings provide gentle pressure up each leg to prevent pooling of blood.
2. Be sure the person you care for has the right size of elastic stocking. If the person receives a pair in the hospital, he or she will have been measured.
3. You will need the following supplies:
  - a. Pair of stockings
  - b. Option - Powder or cornstarch if person is not allergic
  - c. Option – tape measure
  - d. Option – pair of disposable gloves
  - e. Care diary
4. Help a person put on stockings when he or she is waking up in the morning. If you wait until later, their feet might swell, making it more difficult to apply stockings.
5. Wash your hands for 15 seconds, and then dry.
6. Have the person lie down in bed, laying flat on their back. You can place a pillow under their head.
7. Look at each leg carefully for any signs of a DVT. Be sure to look all around the skin surfaces.
  - a. Notice the color of the skin. Is there any area of redness? Is the color the same on both legs?
  - b. Take the palm of your hand and place it gently on the skin, along each leg at the calf area. Is the skin cold? Warm? Same on both legs? Check carefully for warmth over any area of redness.
  - c. Look at the size of each leg. Is there any swelling?
  - d. Take a tape measure and measure around each calf. Compare the size of each calf so that you have a baseline.
  - e. First measure the distance from the base of the heel to the area on the calf where the first calf will be measured. Then take the tape measure and measure around the leg at the calf, this is the calf circumference. Measure the second leg at the same location. This will help keep the measurements consistent.).
  - f. Compare the size of the calves in both legs so that you have a baseline. If one calf is getting larger, that means there is swelling, and it could be due to a DVT.
  - g. Ask the person if he or she notices any pain in the calf or other part of the leg. Sometimes a person will only have pain in the leg when walking or exercising.
  - h. Be sure to write down your observations later in your care diary.
8. If the person's legs are dry, itchy or scaly. Have the person bathe and dry the legs before applying the stockings.
9. **Apply Stockings**
  - a. Turn the stocking partially inside out. Do this by placing one hand into the sock and hold the heel of the sock. Use your other hand to pull the sock inside out down to the heel.

- b. Stand at the foot of the bed, Line up the foot of the sock, with the heel down.
- c. Slide the sock over the foot, being sure the toes are covered. Make sure the foot fits into the toe and heel of the sock. That part of the sock will be right side out.
- d. Move up to the side of the bed. Then, slide the remaining part of the sock up over the person's calf until the sock is completely extended up the leg.
- e. Smooth out any wrinkles. Ridges or wrinkles place pressure on the skin.
- f. Repeat with the opposite leg.
- g. **Tip** - Some people find it easier to pull up the stockings by wearing a pair of disposable gloves. The gloves give you good traction as you pull up on the elastic stocking.
- h. Remind the person to not roll the socks partially down. Rolling creates a constricting band that can cut off circulation.
- i. If you have difficulty applying the stockings, a light dusting of cornstarch or powder might help in pulling the stockings up over the legs. Be sure the person is not allergic to starch or powder.
- j. Help the person up to resume normal activity. Wash your hands.
- k. Enter in your diary what you observe and the calf measurements.