



York and Scarborough  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Anti-embolism stockings

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please telephone  
and request the department or ward where  
you have been receiving treatment

The York Hospital  
Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE  
Tel: 01904 631313

The Scarborough Hospital  
Woodlands Drive, Scarborough, YO12 6QL  
Tel: 01723 368111

Alternatively contact the Anticoagulation Specialist  
Nurse: Tel: 01904 726785  
For more advice about applying your stockings

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# **What are anti-embolism stockings?**

These are stockings made with firm elastic that give graduated compression to the leg. Most are below the knee but occasionally some are full thigh length. Anti-embolism stockings help reduce the risk of blood clots or deep vein thrombosis (DVT) forming in your legs whilst you are in hospital and less active than normal.

**Please ensure that you wear slippers or shoes when mobilising to prevent slipping.**

You have been measured for stockings and your measurements are:

.....length and ..... calf width.

The size provided to you is.....

# **How do anti-embolism stockings work?**

The stockings squeeze your feet and lower legs, helping your blood to circulate around your legs more quickly. This makes blood clotting less likely.

# **How long will I need to wear them?**

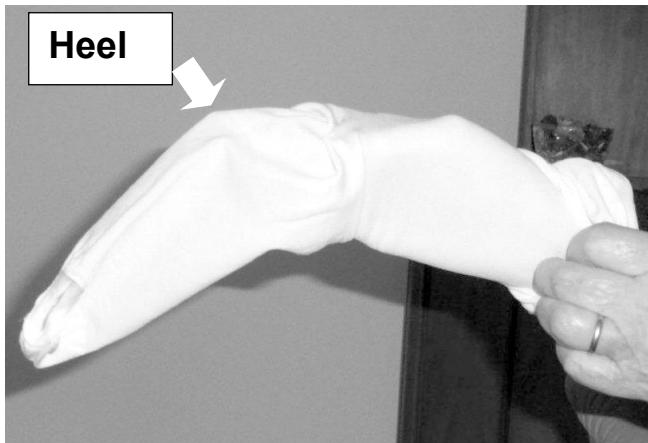
It is important to wear the stockings for as much of the time as possible, day and night, whether in hospital or afterwards at home, until you are back to your usual level of activity.

# How do I put the stockings on?

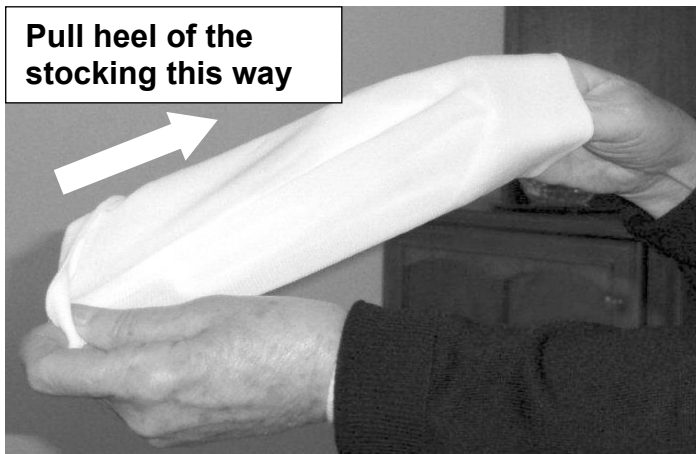
1. Find the heel of the stocking.



2. Put your hand into the stocking from the top and go down as far as the heel.



3. Hold the heel with your hand and turn the stocking inside out as far as possible.



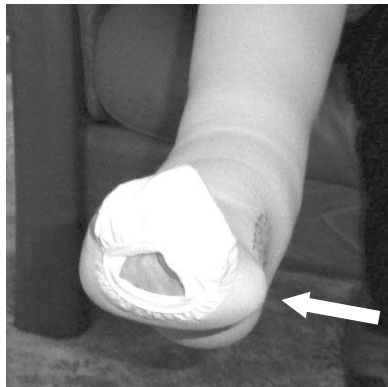
4. Put the stocking over foot and heel. The centre of your heel should be over the heel pocket of the stocking.



5. Pull the stocking over your ankle and calf and up to your knee. Smooth out any spare material making sure the heel is in the heel pocket.



6. If the stockings have a hole in the foot this should be positioned under the foot, towards the base of the toes.



7. To remove stockings fold over at the top and pull off inside out. Avoid rolling the stocking down the leg since this can make it very tight.



# How do I avoid problems with blood circulation and my skin when I have to wear the stockings?

- Do not roll the stockings down, as they will form a tight band around your leg. This can be dangerous as it constricts the blood flow and can cause skin sores. Do not turn down the top of the stocking.
- Take the stockings off once a day to wash your legs and feet and to check the condition of your skin. Do not leave them off for longer than 30 minutes per day.
- If you develop pain or discomfort, bruising or blisters or areas where your skin has changed colour you should stop wearing the stockings and seek immediate advice from your doctor or nurse.

If you develop numbness, pins and needles, pain or soreness in your foot or leg, this may be a sign that the stockings are too tight. Remove the stockings and ask your doctor or nurse for advice.

If you have a rash on your legs or feet, which has appeared whilst you have been wearing the stockings you may have an allergy to the elastic or fibres in the stockings. Remove the stockings and ask your doctor or nurse for advice.



# How do I look after my stockings?

If your doctor or nurse has told you to continue to wear your stockings at home remember to:

- Put on clean stockings at least every three days (or earlier if soiled). You will be given a spare pair from the hospital if you need to wear them after discharge. Please speak to the nurse if you require more pairs.
- Wash stockings by hand or in a washing machine at no more than 40°C. Do not use bleach or fabric conditioner.
- Spin or air dry. Do **not** wring out, tumble dry or iron them, as this will damage the elastic.
- Do not put the stockings on when they are wet.
- Avoid using greasy ointments, oils and lanolin on your skin as this damages the stockings' elastic fibres. However, a simple moisturiser can be used after washing your legs. Allow to dry before re-applying stockings.
- With correct care, the stockings should last for up to three months. If you need to wear them for longer than this you should ask about getting a new supply.

# **Does everyone have to wear stockings?**

You should not be offered anti-embolism stockings if:

- you have recently had a stroke
- you have peripheral vascular disease or have had peripheral arterial bypass grafting
- you have gangrene in your feet or legs or recent skin graft
- you have cellulitis or leg / foot ulcers
- you have dermatitis or fragile "tissue paper" skin on your legs
- you have fluid on the lungs caused by heart failure
- you have an allergy to the stocking material
- your legs are very swollen or you have a major limb deformity preventing correct fit or unusual leg size or shape
- you have peripheral neuropathy or other causes of sensory impairment
- a good stocking fit cannot be achieved

**If you are unable to put on / remove the stockings or do not have anybody to do this daily at home, inform the nurse and doctor looking after you as you will not be suitable to use these after discharge.**

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:  
Anisah Ahmad, Anticoagulant Pharmacist, The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE or telephone 01904 724328.

## **Teaching, training and research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net).

An answer phone is available out of hours.

# Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:

[www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/](http://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/)

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