



Understand your compression: why dose matters

There are a wide range of compression garments available, that deliver different amounts of compression. It can be overwhelming and difficult to know what to use. Here we provide some guidance on getting it right.



If you have been advised that you need to wear compression to manage your limb condition, you will need to speak to your healthcare professional about what is needed for you and your individual needs and preferences.

Compression selection

Compression garment selection should

consider several factors to arrive at the right compression product for you — there is no one size fits all and it's important that you get it right to get the best results.

Your healthcare professional should complete a full health assessment, and use all the available information to



accurately diagnose your leg condition and help you to decide on the most appropriate treatment.

Why the right dose of compression matters

Just like with medicine, the dose of compression therapy needs to be just right to work properly. Think about taking paracetamol for a headache. If you only take half a tablet, it probably won't help. If you take too much, it could make you unwell. But if you take the right amount, usually two tablets, it's more likely to be therapeutically effective at easing your pain.

Why do doses of compression differ?

Compression therapy can be used to deliver different amounts of pressure, measured in millimetres of mercury (mmHg), to the affected limb. The garment encases the affected area and applies pressure to improve circulation and lymphatic flow, helping to move fluid from the tissues and back into the circulation. This alleviates symptoms such as swelling and can promote wound healing.

Different people will need differing amounts of pressure, depending on their individual needs. To simplify this, the pressures delivered can be thought of as a dose, such as strong, or low, for example.

Examples of different doses of compression

- **Strong compression dose:** If you have a venous leg ulcer, lymphoedema or severe swelling you

may be offered a strong compression dose. This means your garment will deliver a large amount of pressure to the affected area. This can be delivered using compression hosiery, a compression hosiery kit, wrap or bandage system.

- **Low compression dose:** You may be offered a low compression dose, that delivers a low amount of pressure to the affected area. This option may be used if you have mild to moderate peripheral arterial disease (poor blood flow to the legs).

Sometimes, your healthcare professional may start you on a low compression dose at your first appointment if they aren't able to complete a full assessment straight away. This means you aren't delayed in receiving treatment but that you will come to no harm while you await assessment. Once a full assessment is done (which should be as soon as possible) and it is established that you have adequate blood flow to your limbs, your dose of compression may be increased to better support your leg condition.

Getting the dose right is important to manage your lower leg condition effectively. If you think the compression dose is not enough or too much, go back to your healthcare professional to see if your compression needs reassessing. It is always better to get this checked as early as possible to make sure your symptoms don't get worse. ➡