Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

# Putting on and caring for your anti-embolism stockings

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# Putting on and Caring for Your Anti-Embolism Stockings

## Patient Information

## Surgical Admissions Lounge

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- Leaflet title: Putting on and Caring for Your Anti-Embolism Stockings
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## Why should I wear stockings?

These stockings are designed to reduce the risk of blood clots (deep vein thrombosis) in the legs, at times when you are a higher risk of blood clots, such as undergoing an operation.

## Blood clots

A blood clot (known as embolism) develops initially in the large leg veins due to poor or slow blood flow. Past or present medical history, a surgical procedure, medications, pregnancy or recently giving birth, can place a person at greater risk of forming a blood clot.

Blood clots are the cause of the greatest number of preventable hospital deaths and a condition that can affect patients of any age.

## How do anti-embolism stockings work?

If correctly applied, anti-embolism stockings assist and improve the blood flow in your veins by speeding up the circulation of blood. This makes clotting less likely.

Anti-embolism stockings can be worn on their own or used in addition to anti-coagulation medications that thin the blood (such as warfarin or enoxaparin) in patients who have been

assessed as ‘at risk’ of clot formation. They have particular importance to patients where anticoagulation medication cannot be prescribed.

## How to put on your stocking(s)

The stocking will be a ‘snug’ fit, so accurate measuring and size selection is important. Putting on the stockings can be difficult because they fit closely and therefore you should follow the following guidance.

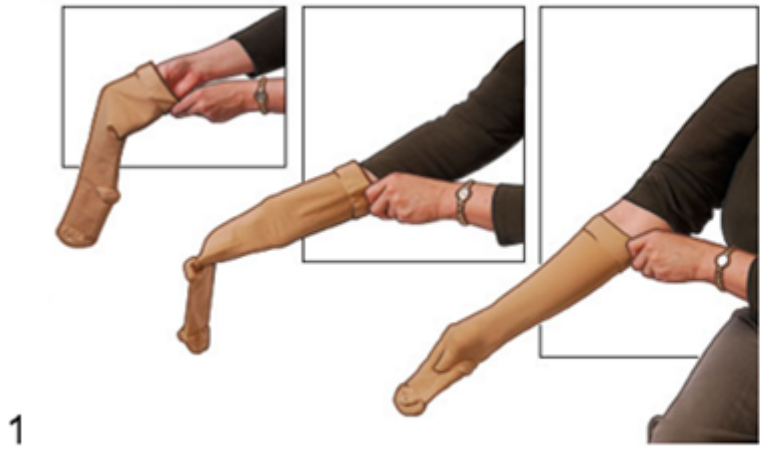
Please also read information in stocking packet

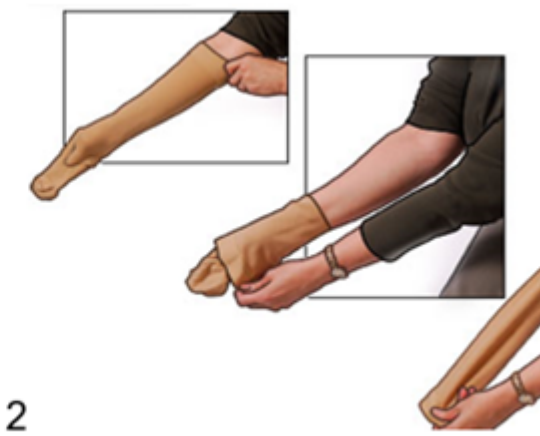
- Insert your hand into the foot area of the stocking.
- Grasp the centre of the heel pocket and turn the stocking inside out, stopping at the heel.
- Carefully position stocking over your foot and heel, making sure your heel is located in the heel pocket.
- Pull the body of the stocking up and around your calf.
- Smooth out any excess material. Pull  the toe section forward to smooth the ankle and instep area and allow your toes to be comfortable.
- Some operations may limit your ability to do this by yourself. Please discuss with a member of your surgical team and consider support you have available.

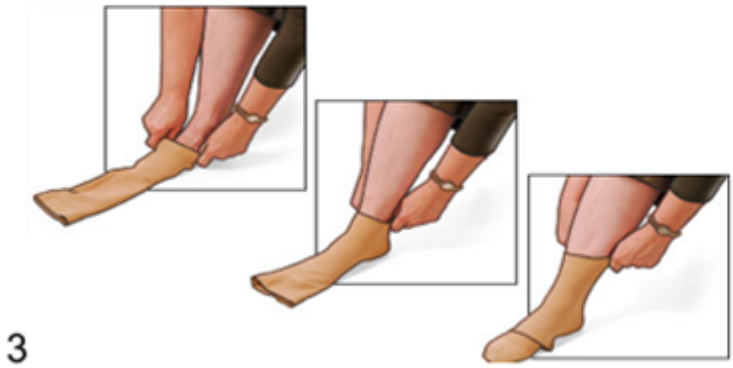
## How will I get a pair?

If you need anti-embolism stockings a member of the nursing staff will measure your leg(s) and select the correct size for you. These may fit up to your knee or thigh.

The first pair of stockings will be provided by the ward free of charge: you will be able to purchase an additional pair at a cost of £5.00 from the General Office in the Administration Building between 9am-3pm. (Wrightington only)







## How long will I have to wear the stockings?

You will need to wear the stockings day and night until you no longer have significantly reduced mobility. You may still need to wear them after you go home, especially if recommended by a doctor. If you have had a deep vein thrombosis (DVT) in the past, or a history of blood clotting disorders, you will be given specific instructions about wearing the stockings at home.

## How to look after yourself and your stockings

- Remove your stockings for 30 minutes every day to inspect your skin and undertake personal hygiene. Your stockings should then be put back on.
- Clean stockings should be put on every three days, or sooner if they become dirty.
- You should do your leg exercise to encourage improved blood flow.
- Do not attempt to walk without wearing well-fitted slippers or shoes.
- Do not leave the stockings rolled down your legs. This cancels the benefit of wearing them.
- Avoid using ointments,oils or lanolin on your skin as these can damage the stocking fibres and make the stockings slip down.
- Be aware of pain and/or numbness, pins and needles, discolouration of your toes,leg swelling or blistering. This could mean that the stockings are too tight. Tell the nurse looking after you if you have any of these problems. If you are wearing stockings at home, contact your GP if you have any problems with them.



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