



Compression therapy for venous diseases

Medical compression stockings prevent new varicose veins from forming and keep existing venous disease under control. If venous disease is left untreated, it may become progressively worse and become chronic. This is why it is particularly important to prevent deterioration or complication consistently by wearing compression stockings.

How do compression stockings work?

The pressure of the stocking constricts the diameter of the vein. The venous valves can close again, thus reducing the amount of blood flowing back down into the legs. The smaller diameter of the veins means that the blood flows more quickly again, which prevents the formation of blood clots or thrombi. The drop in pressure from the foot up to the thigh accelerates the flow of blood back to the heart. When the leg is moved, the stocking forms an external barrier for the muscles, which makes for a more effective muscle – pumping action.

Compression stocking lengths

Depending on the location of the damage to the veins and how far it has progressed, different lengths of compression stocking are used. The call to action by you – is to visit your health professional. If a compression garment is required (e.g. stocking, pantyhose, arm sleeve) along with the compression class, a prescription/referral is given. The patient then contacts Adelaide Compression Products to obtain the required garment/s. A garment that is suitable for everyday use, fits perfectly, and is as effective as possible is especially important for people who wear compression garments. It is recommended that garments should be renewed after 6 (six) months of continuous wear.

Adelaide Compression Products

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The difference between support compression and anti-embolism stockings (White Stockings)

Compression stockings have a defined pressure gradient, reducing from the heel to the thigh. This is the main difference from support stockings that are not subject to a standard. This means that only the compression stocking is medically effective and is therefore only available from specialist outlets. Support stockings can be worn as a preventative measure, but these do not exert the same pressure as a compression stocking.

The 'white stockings' in hospital are always used when a patient is confined to bed for prolonged periods. They are called anti-thrombosis stockings because they prevent blood clots from occurring when patients are lying in bed. These are only meant for immobilised legs and do not fulfil their function in mobile patients.

Compression classes

Medical compression stockings are classified into four different compression classes. The severity of a venous disease determines the pressure classes.

Guidelines suggestions for compression:

Class 1. 18.0 – 21.0 mmHg:

Moderate compression

Slight varicosis without any pronounced tendency to oedema
Early varicosis in pregnancy. With special reasons, e.g. loss of strength in the hands, arthrosis, rheumatism, diabetes.

Class 2. 23.0 – 32.0 mmHg:

Moderately strong compression.

More serious symptoms, pronounced varicosis with a tendency to oedema/post-traumatic swelling, after sclerosis
For lymphoedema and elephantiasis
and surgery of varicoses to stabilise successful treatment
and for more pronounced varicosis in pregnancy.

Class 3. 34.0 – 46.0 mmHg:

Strong compression.

All complications following constitutional and post-thrombotic venous insufficiency, pronounced tendency to oedema, secondary varicosis, active venous ulcerations.

Class 4. At least 49.0 mmHg:

Extra-strong compression

For lymphoedema and elephantiasis.