

Compression garments

Compression garments are used in the management of lymphoedema. They are specially designed to apply continuous, graduated compression, with most compression at the ankle/ wrist and decreasing up the limb in order to encourage fluid to move away from the swollen area to an area where the fluid can drain.

Your compression garment has been chosen specially for you from a large number of compression garments. It is essential that you receive the correct garment so that your lymphoedema can be successfully managed. The full details of the garment or garments you need are on your prescription request letter.

Obtaining compression garments on prescription

The garment will be prescribed by your GP and dispensed by your pharmacist in the same way as drugs and other prescribed products.

How do I receive my compression garment?

Your lymphoedema therapist will tell you if it is possible to email your prescription request letter to your GP and will give you a copy for your records.

Alternatively, your therapist will give you your prescription request letter. Take one copy to your GP so that your prescription can be prepared. Once your prescription is ready, it will either:

- Be available for you to collect from your GP surgery **or**
- Be forwarded to your chosen pharmacy.

If you collect your prescription from your GP, you can choose how to get your compression garment:

- You can take your prescription to any pharmacy for the garment to be ordered. The pharmacist will contact you when the prescription is ready.
- It is helpful to take your copy of the prescription request letter too, so that the pharmacist can check that the details are correct.
- You can contact Patient Choice: An independent and impartial prescription home delivery service. Telephone 01268 777 633, Freephone 0800 862 0686, Email orders@patientchoice.net Web www.patientchoice.net

Always check that you have the correct garment



Applying your garments

You will find it easier to apply your garment first thing in the morning. Follow the instructions enclosed with your garments to help you. Your garment should be correctly positioned on your limb; the fabric should be spread evenly along your limb with no twisting or creases. The top band should sit in the correct position on your limb. It is important to correctly apply your garment in order to help manage your lymphoedema.

Tips for application

- Ensure your skin is dry; do not apply moisturiser just before application
- If your skin is oily or damp, apply talc
- Sharp fingernails, jewellery and rough skin can damage the fabric
- Wearing rubber gloves can help create friction, making pulling your garment on/off easier
- There are application aids to help; please ask your therapist for more details.

Looking after your garments

Your garments should last up to six months with daily wear. Failure to care for your garments and poor application may result in your swelling not being well controlled.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for daily washing and drying. In general, most garments can be machine washed on a gentle cycle at 40°C, using mild detergent, with no fabric conditioner. Preferably air dry, and do not dry over a radiator or iron to avoid overheating and damaging the elasticity.

Care of the silicone top band

If your garment has a silicone top band, cream, powder, natural body oils and skin cells may prevent the silicone band from keeping the garment in place. Before washing, turn the garment inside out and after washing, wipe the silicone band with a damp cloth to remove any residue.

The Royal Marsden will provide your first garment and, further garments will be provided by your GP on prescription. Please check that you receive the correct garment from your pharmacy.

Contact details

If you have any concerns or queries regarding your compression garment, please contact the lymphoedema service:

Sutton: 0208 661 3504

Chelsea: 0207 808 2981

