

Choosing the Right Compression Stockings

Do I Need Compression Stockings?

Compression stockings are used for the prevention and treatment of venous and lymphatic conditions such as oedema, varicose veins, phlebitis and thrombosis.

Their primary purpose is to return blood from the lower legs back to the heart. The stockings squeeze the leg muscles, which gently works the veins and helps to push the blood back up the legs. This helps to prevent leg swelling and, to a lesser extent, blood clots.



Compression stockings help with:

- Aching and heavy feeling in the legs
- Swelling in the legs
- Preventing blood clots, especially after surgery or injury or for long airplane flights when you are inactive for extended periods

Be aware that compression stockings are NOT recommended if you have:

- Severe arterial or neuropathological disease.
- A skin infection, weeping ulcer or dermatitis. Bandaging is preferable until the wound heals.
- Unpredictable swelling. This will affect the fit of the stockings, so a bandage may be more appropriate.

You should talk to your doctor about whether compression stockings are right for you.

What Classification Do I Need?

Compression stockings come in three different classifications, or levels of compression, which are measured in millimetres of mercury (mmHg).

Class	Compression	Measure	Usage
0	Travel	10 -15 mmHg	For preventative use during long airline flights or other periods of limited leg movement
1	Moderate	15 - 20 mmHg	For aching legs, minor ankle, leg and foot swelling and minor varicose veins.
2	Firm	20 -30 mmHg	For aching legs, moderate varicose veins, pregnancy, moderate swelling, superficial thrombophlebitis, to help prevent venous ulcers.
3	Extra Firm	30 - 40 mmHg	For serious conditions including severe varicose veins, lymphoedema, post sclerotherapy/vein surgery, healing venous ulcers, deep vein thrombosis or chronic venous insufficiency.

Class 2 and 3 compression stockings are only available with a doctor's prescription or a written recommendation from an occupational therapist or a registered nurse.

What Size Do I Need?

It is critically important that you are properly measured and fitted for compression stockings. An improper fit can cause serious problems with circulation.

Measurements should always be taken in the morning when legs are rested and not swollen.

Stocking are available in various styles include knee high, mid thigh, thigh high, thigh high with belt (chaps style), waist high (pantyhose style) and maternity style.

The chart below shows the parts of the leg that need to be measured depending on the style desired. However, we recommend using a specialist referred by your doctor, nurse or occupational therapist.

Willaid Health Care Equipment does offer a free measurement service for those who are referred.

Do I Need to Order My Stockings?

We stock Dr. Comfort knee-highs in travel class and Class 1 with open or closed toe on an ongoing basis in a range of sizes. Drop by any time to pick these up.

We will measure and order to fit a range of other brands. These include Mediven, Jobst and Venosan. We can access the full range of sizes, styles and classifications in each of these brands.

Compression stockings are not suitable for everyone or for all purposes, so never wear someone else's compression stockings.