

# Society for Vascular Nursing Patient Education: COMPRESSION PASTE BANDAGES

**Definition:** Compression paste bandages are gauze roll bandages saturated with zinc oxide (with or without calamine lotion) used to improve venous circulation, reduce swelling, and promote healing of wounds.

**Supplies:** Basin, washcloth, towel, liquid soap, compression paste bandage, dry gauze roll, tape, elastic bandage, scissors, convenient rest for leg.

**Follow-up:** It is important to keep your appointments. A trained family member or certified health agency nurse can change the compression bandage at home. If problems arise, or if you have any questions, contact your provider.

## **Don't:**

- ✓ Apply compression bandage before checking pulses in feet. Consult the prescriber if there is any question or concern.
- ✓ Apply new dressing at the end of the day when leg is swollen.
- ✓ Reapply new dressing before first washing and inspecting the leg and wounds.
- ✓ Apply the dressing with the leg down (dependent position).
- ✓ Wrap the dressing around the leg haphazardly, creating bulky folds produce pressure areas, especially over the foot.
- ✓ Wrap the dressing or ace bandage too tightly.
- ✓ Encircle the ace bandage with tape — this could reduce circulation.
- ✓ Get the dressing wet when bathing.
- ✓ Sit with legs down or stand for long periods of time.

## **Do:**

- ✓ Apply compression bandage in the morning before leg swells.
- ✓ Carefully remove previous bandage.
- ✓ Inspect leg and wounds, noting changes.
- ✓ Cleanse leg and wound with soap and warm water, using a basin or shower, drying gently by patting towel against skin.
- ✓ Apply medications or special dressings to ulcers or wounds as directed.
- ✓ Elevate and rest leg and foot to apply bandage.
- ✓ Start applying the bandage at the base of the toes, overlapping the paste bandage 50 percent in a figure eight pattern.
- ✓ Continue wrapping dressing to within 1 inch of the knee, using firm, even pressure.
- ✓ Put pleats on the edges of the bandage when wrapping for a better fit around the leg.
- ✓ Cover paste bandage with dry gauze roll.
- ✓ Cover paste bandage and dry gauze roll with an elastic bandage, wrapping supportively with gentle pressure from base of toes to within 1 inch of knee.
- ✓ Secure the ace bandage with tape.
- ✓ Cover the dressing with a nylon stocking or sock to keep it clean.
- ✓ Cover the dressing with a plastic garbage bag when bathing. Keep the dressing dry at all times.
- ✓ Resume walking. This decreases swelling especially with an applied compression dressing.
- ✓ Elevate your leg above your heart. This should be done at least three times per day for 20–30 minutes — more is better.
- ✓ Change the dressing as ordered by your healthcare provider.
- ✓ Monitor your legs for pain, numbness, tingling, or color changes. Call your healthcare provider with any questions or concerns.