

Graduated elastic tubular bandages (Tubigrip) for venous leg ulceration

For patients with venous leg ulceration compression therapy is recommended and high compression has been shown to be better than low compression (Fletcher et al 1997). Not all patients are able to tolerate the high levels of compression required to be therapeutic.

A study of 28 patients attending a specialist wound healing clinic who were (Bales and Harding K 2003) unable to tolerate therapeutic compression used graduated tubigrip to introduce them to compression therapy.

The team at the Wound Healing Research Unit used a graduated tubigrip system to introduce people to compression and also to treat patients who are non concordant with compression bandaging.

Patient's reports that the tubigrip system was comfortable when applied in three graduated layers and had the advantage of being easily removed and reapplied later.

How to apply:

- Measure widest part of ankle
- Measure widest part of calf
- Apply 3 layers as follows
 - Layer 1 – from the metatarsal heads to the tibial tuberosity (use calf measurement)
 - Layer 2 – from the metatarsal heads to mid calf (use calf measurement)
 - Layer 3 – from the metatarsal heads to the origin of the Achilles heel (use ankle measurement)
- Patients can initially be fitted with one size larger to allow them to gain confidence and prevent discomfort.
- Increase to normal fitting size after 2 weeks or to standard compression system (e.g. multilayer or short stretch)

This system is also beneficial for frequent dressing changes because of copious exudate or to apply daily treatments such as topical steroids. It can be beneficial for patients who want to participate in the management for their ulcer and change their own dressings.

Measure around the affected joint / limb at the widest point

Size (to fit joint limb):

- B = 12.5cm – 14.5cm
- C = 15cm – 24cm
- D = 25cm – 35cm
- E = 36cm – 44.5cm
- F = 45cm – 50cm
- G = 51cm – 60cm

Fletcher A. Cullum N. Sheldon J (1997) A systematic review of compression treatment for venous ulcers BMJ 315 576-80

Bale S and Harding K (2003) Managing Patients unable to tolerate therapeutic compression British Journal of Nursing (Tissue Viability Supplement) vol 12; 129 S4 – S13

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