

Wrapping the Leg to Control Lymphedema

The lymph system helps to get rid of waste products from your cells and helps your body fight infection. Lymphedema can happen when your lymph nodes are unable to drain the fluids from your tissues. This can cause swelling in your arms or legs. This guide will show you how to wrap your leg to control the swelling caused by lymphedema. This wrapping method is called multi-layer, low stretch bandaging. Your physical therapist will show you how to wrap your leg.

Materials you will need:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Here are some basic guidelines:

- Your bandages should be wrapped just tight enough to stay in place and feel firm. Bandages should not be too tight or too loose. Bandages that are too tight can cause pain, numbness, or tingling in your leg or foot. If you have these symptoms, remove your bandages. **Do not** wrap your leg again until your symptoms are gone.
- **Do not** tug on your bandages or stretch them when you wrap your leg.
- To protect your skin from irritation and scratches, use tape to hold the end of your bandages in place. **Do not** use metal clips. **Do not** put tape on your skin.
- Change the direction that you wrap with each bandage you use.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

- The number of bandages you use will depend on the length and size of your leg and how much compression you need. Your physical therapist will tell you how many bandages to use to wrap your leg.

Instructions for Wrapping Your Leg

Step 1:

To prevent dryness, use a low pH lotion on your leg and foot before you wrap your leg. Pull on the large stockinette from your foot up to the top of your leg. The stockinette should stop about 2 inches from the top of your leg.



Step 2:

Wrap the fluffy padding around your foot and leg. It is important to use enough padding to make your leg the same width, from your foot to your thigh. You may need to use more padding around smaller areas of your leg, such as your ankle. Wrap your lower leg and foot first before you wrap your knee and thigh.



Step 3:

Use several bandages to wrap your foot and leg. Change the direction you wrap with each bandage you use. As you wrap, overlap about half the width of the bandage.



- Use the smallest width bandage to wrap your ankle. Wrap around your ankle, then down and around base of your toes. Wrap around the middle of your foot and back up to your ankle. Repeat this step. Keep wrapping your leg until you use all the bandage. Use tape to hold the end in place.



- The bandage should cover the fluffy padding completely. **Do not** wrap your ankle too much. You should be able to move your ankle.

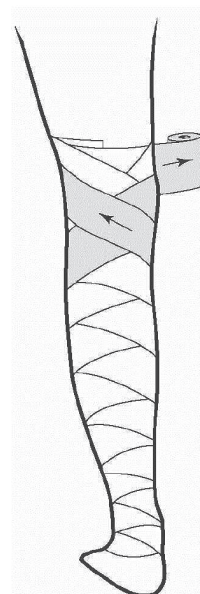
- Use the larger bandage to wrap your ankle in the opposite direction. Wrap down, around your heel, and around the sole of your foot.



- Wrap your leg up towards your knee. The bandage should stop around your upper calf, just below your knee. Use tape to hold the end in place.

- Gently squeeze your foot, ankle and leg to find any area that does not feel firm. This is where you will start your next bandage. Wrap up towards your knee and cross the bandage behind your knee. Make an anchor wrap just above your knee to hold the bandage in place. Wrap your bandage back, behind your knee, below your knee. Use the rest of the bandage to fill in your knee area. Use tape to hold the end in place.

- Wrap your leg until you reach the top of your leg. You may need to use more than one bandage to wrap your leg. Use tape to hold the end in place.



Other instructions you may be given:

Follow these additional instructions **only** if your physical therapist puts a check in the box.

Add foam to your bandaging

- Foam will be cut to fit the shape of your leg or placed in a small fabric bag. Your physical therapist will show you how to use the foam.
- **Do not** put foam on your skin. The foam should be put between the layers of your bandages.
- To protect your skin from irritation, change the location of the foam each day.



Foam wedge and foam chips in a bag.

Bandage your toes

- Wrap your toes after you put on your stockinette, but before you wrap your foot and leg with the fluffy padding.
- Wrap the bandage around the middle of your foot to hold the bandage in place.
- Start with your big toe and wrap around your nail 2 times. Then wrap around the middle of your toe and back around your foot.
- Bandage the rest of your toes using the steps above. **Do not** wrap your pinky toe. Between each toe wrap, wrap the bandage around your foot to hold the bandage in place.



- Wrap any leftover bandage around your foot and tape the end to hold it in place. **Do not** wrap your foot too tight.
- Make sure the wrap is loose enough to fit 2 fingers underneath.



The Toeband completely wrapped and held with tape.

Physical Therapist: _____

Phone Number: _____