

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH  
WARREN GRANT MAGNUSON CLINICAL CENTER  
NURSING and PATIENT CARE SERVICES

**Standard of Practice:** Care of the Patient with a Sequential Compression Device (SCD), Anti-Embolism Stockings, and/or Other Compression Stockings

**Essential Information**

1. A medical order is required prior to initiating a SCD and/or anti-embolism stockings. If anti-embolism stockings are required, the medical order specifies either thigh-high or knee-high.
2. A medical order and a consult from Rehabilitation Medicine are required for Jobst stockings. These stockings are used primarily for edema and come with varying compression levels. Jobst stockings are not used with a Sequential Compression Device.
3. Unless otherwise ordered, SCD therapy remains in place even when a patient is in a sitting position or reclining in a chair.
4. Determine the type of leg covering required under the SCD sleeve.

**I. ASSESSMENT**

A. Prior to initiating SCD or anti-embolism stockings, a nurse:

1. Assesses a patient for evidence of conditions in which use of SCD's may be contraindicated and discusses with LIP:
  - a. Localized leg conditions in which SCD sleeves or stockings may further aggravate a condition such as dermatitis, vein ligation (immediately post-op), gangrene, or recent skin graft.
  - b. Extreme leg deformity which may alter correct application of SCD or stocking.
  - c. Suspected or acute deep venous thrombosis (DVT)
  - d. Presence of malignancy in leg (s)
  - e. Abnormalities of circulation such as arteriosclerosis, atherosclerosis, and/or lymphatic or venous alterations
  - f. Lower extremity edema or pulmonary edema from congestive heart failure
  - g. Patient on bed rest for prolonged periods of time prior to SCD application.
2. Assesses leg size for stocking fit using the guidelines for measurement in the product insert.

B. During and at the end of therapy, a nurse:

1. Assesses in 1 hour after application and thereafter at least every 4 hours for SCD
  - a. Presence of dorsalis pedis and posterior tibial pulses
  - b. Numbness, tingling, discomfort and/or tenderness in calf, thigh, heel or toes.
  - c. Color, temperature, and movement of legs, feet, heels and toes.
  - d. Proper application of SCD sleeves, connection to air controller, & sleeve cooling mode is in the "on" position.
2. Assesses at least every 8 hours for anti-embolism or other stockings (ex: Jobst stockings)
  - a. Presence of dorsalis pedis and posterior tibial pulses
  - b. Numbness, tingling, discomfort and/or tenderness in calf, thigh, heels, or toe
  - c. Color, temperature, and movement of legs, feet, heel and toes

**II. INTERVENTION**

A. A nurse removes the SCD and/or anti-embolism stockings

1. At least every 8 hours to inspect the condition of the skin and legs.
2. If the patient develops numbness, tingling, discomfort and/or tenderness in calf, thigh, heel, or toes remove the SCD and/or anti-embolism stockings, assess condition, and contact the LIP for further directions.

B. The nurse or patient removes the Jobst stockings according to the instructions from Rehabilitation Medicine.

- C. Provide teaching to patient and family about the purpose of product, application procedures, and signs and symptoms requiring contact with LIP

### III. DOCUMENTATION

- A. A nurse documents in the electronic record and/or approved flow sheet:
  - 1. Date and time of SCD or anti-embolism stockings application.
  - 2. Type and size of sleeves and/or stockings applied.
  - 3. Assessments and interventions.
  - 4. Any interval when the sleeves and/or stockings are removed noting the length of time and reason.

### IV. REFERENCES

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Approved:

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