

Procedure guideline: Step-by-step guide to measuring and applying antiembolism stockings

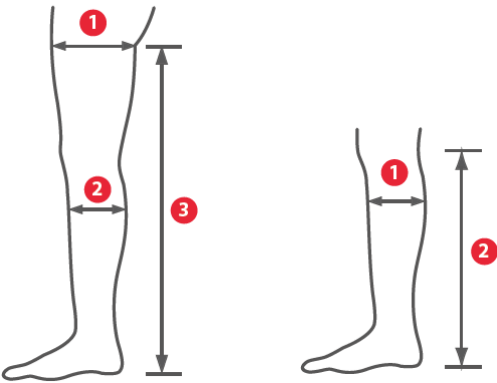
Essential equipment:



- ✓ Disposable tape measure
- ✓ Antiembolism stocking sizing chart
- ✓ Antiembolism Stockings
- ✓ Mechanical Thromboprophylaxis Care Record Sheet



Action	Rationale
Pre-procedure Perform the stockings safety checks: ➤ Is the VTE risk assessment done? ➤ Are the antiembolism stockings prescribed? ➤ Any contraindications noted? ➤ Patient consent for the procedure: explain reasons for wearing antiembolism stockings	All patients admitted to hospital should undergo a risk assessment for venous thrombosis to determine the most appropriate preventive measures, that is thromboprophylaxis¹ The higher the number of risk factors, the greater the risk for VTE² To comply with national guidelines and hospital policy/ guidelines. To ensure that antiembolism stockings are used appropriately³
Procedure Perform hand hygiene prior to the procedure. Ideally take the leg measurements first thing in the morning, with the patient standing up with feet flat on the floor. The tape measure should be snug but not tight, against bare skin. Look at the legs from the back (for length) and from the sides (for girth). Measure both legs separately. The legs should be re-measured: ➤ Post major surgery ➤ Post lower limb surgery ➤ or any other surgery or condition which could cause an increase or reduction in oedema ➤ Maximum after 7 days ➤ On the day of discharge, if prescribed to take home	To prevent cross-infection⁴ To obtain the most accurate leg measurements. To ascertain where the widest part of the calves and / or thighs are. To account for differences between right and left leg. To account for changes in leg size during hospital stay.
Measurement For Thigh Length Stockings 1- Measure upper thigh circumference at widest part of thigh 2- Measure calf circumference at greatest dimension. 3- Measure the distance between the gluteal furrow to bottom of the heel 4- Consult the product sizing poster to determine the appropriate size depending on <u>thigh circumference</u>, <u>calf girth</u> and <u>leg length</u>. (a) If right and left legs measure differently, order two different stocking sizes.	To comply with the manufacturer's instructions. Incorrect sizing causes swelling and bruising to ankles and can constrict blood supply, leading to long-term complications. It has also been suggested that 15–20% of patients cannot effectively wear thigh-length antiembolism stockings because of unusual limb size or shape⁵ Order 2 pairs to ensure that thromboprophylaxis is

(b) If thigh is greater than that stocked by the manufacturer (91.4cm), knee length stockings may be appropriate. Measurement For Knee Length Stockings 1 - Measure calf circumference at greatest dimension 2 - Measure the distance between 1 inch below the knee line to bottom of the heel 3 - Consult the product sizing poster to determine the appropriate size depending on the <u>calf girth</u> and <u>leg length</u>. (a) If right and left legs measure differently, order two different stocking sizes.	uninterrupted during laundering care.  Thigh Length Knee Length
Applying (a) Insert hand into stocking as far as the heel pocket. (b) Grasp centre of heel pocket and turn stocking inside out to heel area. (c) Position stocking over foot and heel, ensuring patient's heel is centred in heel pocket. (d) Pull a few inches of the stocking up around the ankle and calf. (e) Continue pulling the stocking up the leg as described in manufacturer's instructions. When using thigh length, the top band rests in the gluteal furrow. (f) Smooth out wrinkles. (g) Align inspection window to fall under the toes (toes should not stick out).	To ensure correct size of stocking is fitted correctly. Thigh-length stockings are difficult to put on and can roll down, creating a tourniquet just above the knee which restricts blood supply, so patient monitoring and/or assistance should take place to ensure that stockings are fitted smoothly, are not rolled down or the top band folded down.
Post-procedure Document the <u>safety checks</u>, the leg measurements and size of stockings applied in the Mechanical Thromboprophylaxis Care Record Sheet. Provide verbal and written information about the following: (a) how to fit and wear stockings (b) what to report to the nurse, for example any feelings of pain or numbness or skin problems (c) skin care, that is, wash and dry legs daily, applying emollient if clinically indicated (d) reasons for early mobilization and adequate hydration (e) reasons for not crossing legs or ankles – to prevent constriction of blood supply (f) length of time that the stockings should be worn, e.g. stockings should be removed for a maximum of 30 minutes daily and worn until the patient returns to their usual level of mobility.	To ensure that the patient understands how to fit and wear stockings, including self-care measures and what to report to the nurse so as to detect complications early, for example pressure sores, circulation difficulties of wearing antiembolism stockings⁶
Adapted from Dougherty & Lister, 2015 (Royal Marsden Hospital Manual)	