

LYMPHEDEMA THERAPY SOURCE

Instructions for the Care of Bandages

If you're scheduled for therapy, you may wonder what supplies you'll need. Your therapist should help you figure this out. However, you'll also need to know how to clean them. That's what this handout covers!

Frequent Washing

Washing bandages after each use is necessary to allow recoiling of the compression & optimum results. Wash liners, elastic gauze (for toes or fingers), foam padding rolls & short-stretch bandages in cool or lukewarm water on gentle cycle. Avoid fabric softener, bleach & Woolite as these damage the elastic fibers. Do not throw items away or cut them! As opposed to common wound care kits, these don't need to be thrown away until they've run their lifespan.

Drying

Dry all items by hanging to dry, lying flat (to dry overnight – fans help) or use “no heat” or air fluff dryer setting. Do not use dryer sheets (like Downey). Roll each item before returning to therapy. A pen or pencil helps roll the toe or finger gauze.

Care Tips

- Washing supplies in a garment bag may help prevent them from getting tangled.
- Smooth out & hang to dry for easier rolling.
- Purchase a bandage roller (or use a drill with a long bit) for faster rolling.
<https://www.amazon.com/bandage-roller/s?k=bandage+roller>
- If soiled, cotton or foam padding rolls can be washed separately on gentle cycle, cool water. Lay flat to dry.

Bathing

You'll often need to keep your bandages on after each session until you return to therapy (to prevent refilling). The exception is if you experience pain. Showering with bandages can be challenging. It's recommended you consider using a cast protector (see below examples) or a trash bag (secured with Seran Wrap & waterproof tape). For fall safety, also consider using a shower chair or non-skid mat & outside tub non-skid rug to prevent slipping. Alternatively, you can sponge bathe. This will get old but remember, it's temporary!

- Arm Cast Protector:
https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0C49QHZYX/ref=sspa_dk_detail_3?psc=1&pd_rd_i=B0C49QHZYX&pd_rd_w=KDPnk&content-id=amzn1.sym.8c2f9165-8e93-42a1-8313-73d3809141a2&pf_rd_p=8c2f9165-8e93-42a1-8313-73d3809141a2&pf_rd_r=VF9X86M17ZX3E8846P3Y&pd_rd_wg=4Qlfn&pd_rd_r=38759182-f033-46b4-b565-a69bd5ddc158&s=industrial&sp_csd=d2lkZ2V0TmFtZT1zcF9kZXRhZWw
- Leg Cast Protector: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0D7C3P81J?ref=ppx_yo2ov_dt_b_fed_asin_title&th=

Hands

If your arm is bandaged, keeping your fingers clean can be challenging. Using a large glove (like a dish-cleaning glove or disposable gloves) is helpful.

Pants/Shoes

If your legs are bandaged, you will likely need to consider using:

- non-skid socks
- Crocks, ortho Velcro shoe, or larger shoe
- another alternative for foot covering.

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Given the layers of compression & thicker foam padding recommended, you will not fit into your regular-sized shoe. You can purchase non-skid socks or get larger shoes. You may also need to consider larger pants (large sweats or scrub pants) or wearing a long, loose skirt (if appropriate). For therapy, shorts may be sufficient. Otherwise, you may be asked to remove your clothing (except underwear) so MLD can be appropriately applied.

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