

## *Article 3*

### *Graduated Compression Stockings*

These are specially constructed garments which apply progressively less pressure as one goes up the leg (i.e. The hose squeezes harder at the ankle than at the knee and harder at the knee than in the thigh.). This pressure pushes the vein walls closer together, potentially restoring valve function, and creating a pressure gradient which favors return of blood from the leg (see figure 1). This, in turn, can alleviate many of the symptoms of venous insufficiency. The only caveat is that patients must be diligent in wearing and replacing the hose. Hose, in general, should be worn during the day while on ones feet. At bedtime they may be removed. Compression hose do wear out and usually require replacement every 6 months.

When worn and replaced appropriately, compression hose can be very effective for symptom relief. However, they do not correct the underlying venous insufficiency or improve the cosmetic appearance of varicose or spider veins. In addition, wearing the hose can be uncomfortable, especially in the warmer months.

Compression hose are manufactured by a number of companies. There are a wide range of styles, colors and lengths (see figure 2). A prescription is required from your physician. Also, patients must be measured to obtain the correct size. Occasionally, hose must be custom made.

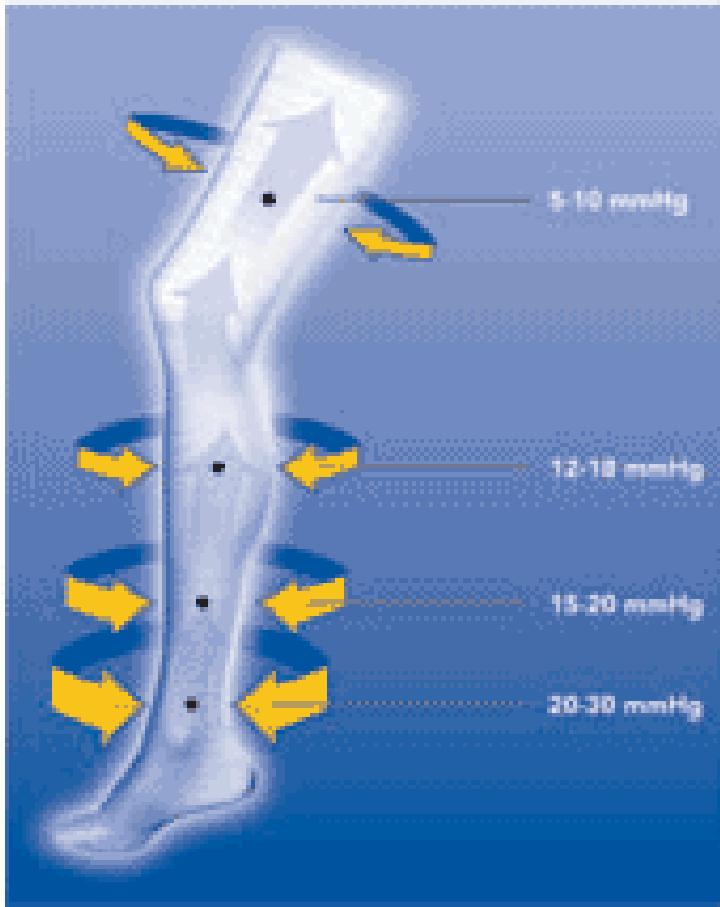


Figure 1  
Compression hose