

Lymphedema Compression Garments

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Introduction

Lymphedema compression garments are addressed by this guideline.

Health Equity Consideration

Health equity is the highest level of health for all individuals; health inequity is the avoidable difference in health status or distribution of health resources due to the social conditions in which individuals are born, grow, live, work, and age. Social determinants of health are the conditions in the environment that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality of life outcomes and risks. Examples include the following: safe housing, transportation, and neighborhoods; racism, discrimination, and violence; education, job opportunities, and income; access to nutritious foods and physical activity opportunities; access to clean air and water; and language and literacy skills.

Criteria

A lymphedema compression garment is considered medically necessary for the treatment of lymphedema affecting any body region when compression therapy is required.

Custom or Non-Standard Garments

A custom fitted gradient compression garment is considered medically necessary when the basic coverage criteria have been met, and there is documentation of why the individual needs a custom fitted garment versus an off-the-shelf standard compression garment.

The individual may need a custom fitted garment for reasons including, but not limited to, **any** of the following:

- The individual is unable to tolerate the fabric composition of a standard garment.
- The circumference of the proximal part of the limb is greater than the distal limb.
- The individual's skin/tissue requires a specific type of garment.

Replacement

Replacement of a lymphedema compression garment is indicated for any of the following:

- The items are lost or stolen.
- The items are irreparably damaged.
- The individual's medical condition has changed.

Frequency Limitations

Gradient compression garments or wraps are covered at the following frequencies:

- Three daytime compression garments or wraps per affected extremity or part of the body once every six months.
- Two nighttime compression garments or wraps per affected extremity or part of the body once every two years.

Compression bandaging supplies and accessories are considered as medically necessary for the treatment of lymphedema if the criteria for the base garment have been met.

Definitions

Gradient compression means the ability to apply a higher level of compression or pressure to the distal (farther) end of the limb or body part affected by lymphedema with lower, decreasing compression or pressure at the proximal (closer) end of the limb or body part affected by lymphedema.

Custom fitted gradient compression garment means a garment that is uniquely sized and shaped to fit the exact dimensions of the affected extremity or part of the body, of an individual to provide accurate gradient compression to treat lymphedema.

Evidence Discussion

McNeely et al. (2024) conducted a rapid review and evidence map evaluating compression therapies and related modalities for the management of cancer-related lymphedema, synthesizing randomized controlled trials published between June 2018 and October 2023. The review included 40 randomized controlled trials, of which 93% enrolled individuals with breast cancer-related lymphedema, and assessed outcomes related to limb volume, symptom control, and maintenance of treatment effects. The authors reported that intervention effects associated with compression therapies ranged from clinically insignificant to large reductions in lymphedema volume, depending on study design and intervention type. Evidence mapping suggested potential benefit of

compression garments for lymphedema prevention, as adjunctive therapy during the intensive phase of complex decongestive therapy, and for nighttime compression during the maintenance phase, which is typically managed in the home setting. However, most trials were rated as having some concerns or high risk of bias, and substantial heterogeneity was noted across interventions, outcome measures, and follow-up durations. The authors concluded that compression garments remained a foundational component of lymphedema management, particularly for long-term maintenance, while emphasizing the need for larger, high-quality, multicenter trials to better define optimal compression strategies, timing, and combinations of therapies.

Medina-Rodríguez et al. (2025) conducted an observational cross-sectional study evaluating adherence to compression garment use and factors influencing compliance among individuals with lymphedema during the maintenance phase of treatment. Ninety-two individuals who had previously completed the intensive phase of complex decongestive therapy were included, and adherence was defined as wearing compression garments for more than 12 hours per day. Overall adherence was low, with only 39.13% of individuals meeting the prescribed wear time. Multivariate analysis demonstrated that individuals with primary lymphedema were more likely to adhere to compression garment use than those with secondary lymphedema ($p=0.01$). Greater edema severity was also associated with increased adherence, as individuals with severe edema were more likely to comply compared with those with moderate edema ($p=0.035$). Perceived comfort of the compression garment was the strongest predictor of adherence, with comfortable garments associated with significantly higher compliance ($p<0.001$). The authors concluded that despite the recognized role of compression garments in maintaining edema stabilization, adherence during home use was suboptimal and influenced by clinical characteristics and garment comfort, underscoring the importance of individualized garment selection and patient education. Study limitations included reliance on self-reported adherence data, subjective assessment of edema severity and comfort, a relatively small sample size, and the cross-sectional design, which limited causal inference and generalizability.

Mestre et al.(2024) conducted a prospective multicenter study evaluating the effectiveness, tolerability, and quality-of-life impact of a newly developed compressive garment in individuals with primary or secondary genital lymphedema. Thirty-two individuals were enrolled and instructed to wear the garment both day and night for a duration of 12 weeks. At study completion, 78.6% of individuals reported overall improvement based on the Patient Global Impression of Change, while physician assessment using the Clinical Global Impression-Improvement scale indicated clinical improvement in 82.8% of participants. Statistically significant reductions were observed in genital swelling ($p=0.01$) and discomfort ($p=0.02$), along with a significant decrease in the mean global genital lymphedema severity score ($p<0.0001$). Improvements were also documented across multiple quality-of-life measures, including physical, psychosocial, and practical domains of the Lymphedema Quality of Life Inventory, as

well as reductions in symptoms such as heaviness, tightness, and urinary dysfunction ($p < 0.05$ for all). The compressive garment was generally well tolerated, with permanent discontinuation due to adverse events occurring in three individuals. The authors concluded that consistent use of a dedicated compressive garment was associated with meaningful improvements in symptom burden and quality of life in genital lymphedema, supporting compression therapy as a key component of long-term management in the home setting. Study limitations included a small sample size, the absence of a control group, reliance on patient-reported outcome measures, and short-term follow-up.

Codes Addressed in this Guideline

A6515	Gradient compression wrap with adjustable straps, full leg, each, custom
A6516	Gradient compression wrap with adjustable straps, foot, each, custom
A6517	Gradient compression wrap with adjustable straps, below knee, each, custom
A6518	Gradient compression wrap with adjustable straps, arm, each, custom
A6519	Gradient compression garment, not otherwise specified, for nighttime use, each
A6520	Gradient compression garment, glove, padded, for nighttime use, each
A6521	Gradient compression garment, glove, padded, for nighttime use, custom, each
A6522	Gradient compression garment, arm, padded, for nighttime use, each
A6523	Gradient compression garment, arm, padded, for nighttime use, custom, each
A6524	Gradient compression garment, lower leg and foot, padded, for nighttime use, each
A6525	Gradient compression garment, lower leg and foot, padded, for nighttime use, custom, each
A6526	Gradient compression garment, full leg and foot, padded, for nighttime use, each

A6527	Gradient compression garment, full leg and foot, padded, for nighttime use, custom, each
A6528	Gradient compression garment, bra, for nighttime use, each
A6529	Gradient compression garment, bra, for nighttime use, custom, each
A6530	Gradient compression stocking, below knee, 18-30 mmhg, each
A6533	Gradient compression stocking, thigh length, 18-30 mmhg, each
A6534	Gradient compression stocking, thigh length, 30-40 mmhg, each
A6535	Gradient compression stocking, thigh length, 40 mmhg or greater, each
A6536	Gradient compression stocking, full length/chap style, 18-30 mmhg, each
A6537	Gradient compression stocking, full length/chap style, 30-40 mmhg, each
A6538	Gradient compression stocking, full length/chap style, 40 mmhg or greater, each
A6539	Gradient compression stocking, waist length, 18-30 mmhg, each
A6540	Gradient compression stocking, waist length, 30-40 mmhg, each
A6541	Gradient compression stocking, waist length, 40 mmhg or greater, each
A6544	Gradient compression stocking, garter belt
A6548	Accessory to custom gradient compression garment, silicone band, any size
A6549	Gradient compression garment, not otherwise specified, for daytime use, each
A6552	Gradient compression stocking, below knee, 30-40 mmhg, each
A6553	Gradient compression stocking, below knee, 30-40 mmhg, custom, each
A6554	Gradient compression stocking, below knee, 40 mmhg or greater, each
A6555	Gradient compression stocking, below knee, 40 mmhg or greater, custom, each

A6557	Gradient compression stocking, thigh length, 30-40 mmhg, custom, each
A6558	Gradient compression stocking, thigh length, 40 mmhg or greater, custom, each
A6559	Gradient compression stocking, full length/chap style, 18-30 mmhg, custom, each
A6560	Gradient compression stocking, full length/chap style, 30-40 mmhg, custom, each
A6561	Gradient compression stocking, full length/chap style, 40 mmhg or greater, custom, each
A6562	Gradient compression stocking, waist length, 18-30 mmhg, custom, each
A6563	Gradient compression stocking, waist length, 30-40 mmhg, custom, each
A6564	Gradient compression stocking, waist length, 40 mmhg or greater, custom, each
A6565	Gradient compression gauntlet, custom, each
A6566	Gradient compression garment, neck/head, each
A6567	Gradient compression garment, neck/head, custom, each
A6568	Gradient compression garment, torso and shoulder, each
A6569	Gradient compression garment, torso/shoulder, custom, each
A6570	Gradient compression garment, genital region, each
A6571	Gradient compression garment, genital region, custom, each
A6572	Gradient compression garment, toe caps, each
A6573	Gradient compression garment, toe caps, custom, each
A6574	Gradient compression arm sleeve and glove combination, custom, each
A6575	Gradient compression arm sleeve and glove combination, each
A6576	Gradient compression arm sleeve, custom, medium weight, each
A6577	Gradient compression arm sleeve, custom, heavy weight, each
A6578	Gradient compression arm sleeve, each

A6579	Gradient compression glove, custom, medium weight, each
A6580	Gradient compression glove, custom, heavy weight, each
A6581	Gradient compression glove, each
A6582	Gradient compression gauntlet, each
A6583	Gradient compression wrap with adjustable straps, below knee, each
A6584	Gradient compression wrap with adjustable straps, not otherwise specified
A6585	Gradient compression wrap with adjustable straps, above knee, each
A6586	Gradient compression wrap with adjustable straps, full leg, each
A6587	Gradient compression wrap with adjustable straps, foot, each
A6588	Gradient compression wrap with adjustable straps, arm, each
A6589	Gradient pressure wrap with adjustable straps, bra, each
A6593	Accessory for gradient compression garment or wrap with adjustable straps, not-otherwise specified
A6594	Gradient compression bandaging supply, bandage liner, lower extremity, any size or length, each
A6595	Gradient compression bandaging supply, bandage liner, upper extremity, any size or length, each
A6596	Gradient compression bandaging supply, conforming gauze, per linear yard, any width, each
A6597	Gradient compression bandage roll, elastic long stretch, linear yard, any width, each
A6598	Gradient compression bandage roll, elastic medium stretch, per linear yard, any width, each
A6599	Gradient compression bandage roll, inelastic short stretch, per linear yard, any width, each
A6600	Gradient compression bandaging supply, high density foam sheet, per 250 square centimeters, each
A6601	Gradient compression bandaging supply, high density foam pad, any size or shape, each

A6602	Gradient compression bandaging supply, high density foam roll for bandage, per linear yard, any width, each
A6603	Gradient compression bandaging supply, low density channel foam sheet, per 250 square centimeters, each
A6604	Gradient compression bandaging supply, low density flat foam sheet, per 250 square centimeters, each
A6605	Gradient compression bandaging supply, padded foam, per linear yard, any width, each
A6606	Gradient compression bandaging supply, padded textile, per linear yard, any width, each
A6607	Gradient compression bandaging supply, tubular protective absorption layer, per linear yard, any width, each
A6608	Gradient compression bandaging supply, tubular protective absorption padded layer, per linear yard, any width, each
A6609	Gradient compression bandaging supply, not otherwise specified
A6610	Gradient compression stocking, below knee, 18-30 mmhg, custom, each
A6611	Gradient compression wrap with adjustable straps, above knee, each, custom

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