Important note
Even though this policy may indicate that a particular service or supply may be considered covered, this conclusion is not based upon the terms of your particular benefit plan. Each benefit plan contains its own specific provisions for coverage and exclusions. Not all benefits that are determined to be medically necessary will be covered benefits under the terms of your benefit plan. You need to consult the Evidence of Coverage to determine if there are any exclusions or other benefit limitations applicable to this service or supply. If there is a discrepancy between this policy and your plan of benefits, the provisions of your benefits plan will govern. However, applicable state mandates will take precedence with respect to fully insured plans and self-funded non-ERISA (e.g., government, school boards, church) plans. Unless otherwise specifically excluded, Federal mandates will apply to all plans. With respect to Senior Care members, this policy will apply unless Medicare policies extend coverage beyond this Medical Policy & Criteria Statement. Senior Care policies will only apply to benefits paid for under Medicare rules, and not to any other health benefit plan benefits. CMS's Coverage Issues Manual can be found on the CMS website.

SERVICE: Compression stockings

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION: Not required.

POLICY:

Gradient compression stockings are ONLY covered under the following conditions:

- it is used to secure a primary dressing over an open venous stasis ulcer that has been treated by a physician or other healthcare professional requiring medically necessary debridement, AND,
- the gradient stockings delivers at least a moderate compression (30-40 mmHg; Class II compression) or higher gradients (gradient greater than 40 mm Hg) to treat one of the following:
  - Lymphatic edema
  - Chronic venous ulcers
  - Post-phlebitic syndrome,
  - Chronic venous insufficiency with documented stasis dermatitis, venous ulcer, or lipodermatosclerosis
  - Postural hypotension
  - Prevention of thrombosis in immobilized persons (e.g., immobilization due to surgery, trauma, general debilitation, etc.)
  - Severe edema in pregnancy
  - Lower extremity edema due to complication of previous surgery, fracture or trauma

- Compression devices are to be used only on one of the 4 extremities (arms or legs)

Coverage for compression garments may be dependent on benefit plan language. Please refer to the benefit plan contract to determine terms, limitations, and conditions of coverage. These garments, when covered as a benefit, follow the durable medical policy.

Gradient compression stockings of less than 20 mmHg are considered to be elastic stockings, disposable and/or consumable outpatient supplies, and over-the-counter items, any of which may be excluded from contract as a covered benefit.
When there is a conflict between this policy and contract language the contract language takes precedence.

OVERVIEW:
Gradient compression stockings are used to support the venous and lymphatic systems of the leg by aiding circulation of blood and lymphatic fluid and preventing blood and fluid accumulation. The specified medical pressure gradient (with pressure decreasing from the foot to the thigh) accelerates the return flow of venous blood to the heart, and reduces the risk of blood clots and embolisms. Metabolic exchange is improved, which also helps to prevent the development of leg ulcers. The external pressure prevents escape of fluid into the tissues, which counter acts the development of edema.

There are four compression classes that are used depending on the severity of the disease. The basic differences are in the strength of the material, and therefore the pressure exerted on the veins.

Class I (20-30 mmHg) is light compression

Class II (30-40 mmHg) is moderate compression, and is usually used for:
- Moderate varicosities,
- Moderate edema,
- Lymphatic edema
- Prevention and management of venous ulcers,
- Prevention of thrombosis,
- Post surgical,
- Orthostatic hypotension,
- Post sclerotherapy,

Class III (40-50 mmHg) is strong compression, and is usually used for:
- Severe varicosities,
- Severe edema,
- Lymphatic edema,
- Management of venous ulcers,
- Post phlebitic syndrome,
- Chronic venous insufficiency,
- Lymphedema,
- Venous ulcers,
- Orthostatic hypotension,
- Post surgery.

Class IV (Over 50 mmHg) is usually used for:
- Syndromes that are more severe than for class III,
- Lymphedema.

There are contraindications to compression therapy, for example: advanced arterial occlusive disease, severe disorders of heart function, weeping skin diseases, severe disorders of nerve function in the arms and legs. For this reason, a physician should prescribe compression therapy.

MANDATES: None

SUPPORTING DATA:
Multiple studies have shown compression stockings of greater than 20 mmHg to be beneficial in the prevention and treatment of venous insufficiency and thrombotic disorders, wounds, and burns. In
addition, gradient compression stockings of less than 40 mmHg are considered to be elastic stockings, disposable and/or consumable outpatient supplies, and over-the-counter items.

A search of peer reviewed literature identified no new clinical trial publications or any additional information that would change the coverage position of this medical policy.

CODES:

**Important note:**

*CODES: Due to the wide range of applicable diagnosis codes and potential changes to codes, an inclusive list may not be presented, but the following codes may apply. Inclusion of a code in this section does not guarantee that it will be reimbursed, and patient must meet the criteria set forth in the policy language.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HCPCS codes</th>
<th>A6501 - A6512, A6531, A6532, A6545</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HCPCS Not Covered</td>
<td>A6530, A6533 - A6544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICD-10 codes</td>
<td>I83.001 – I83.899 (varix);</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CMS:** No current NCD or LCD for this intervention

**Does Medicare Cover Compression Stockings?**

February 19, 2016

Medicare rarely will cover compression garments only for patients with an open venous ulcer, being seen by a physician or health care professional for treatment of that ulcer. For those patients, Medicare will cover a 30-40, or 40-50 mmHg knee high graduated compression stocking. Once the ulcer is healed, or for 20-30 mmHg or less compressions the stocking will not be covered.

Currently, there is no coverage by Medicare for compression arm sleeves, gloves, gauntlets, or other compression garments for patients with Lymphedema.

**POLICY HISTORY:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New</td>
<td>10/18/2010</td>
<td>New policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reviewed</td>
<td>08/02/2012</td>
<td>Reviewed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewed</td>
<td>04/24/2013</td>
<td>Senior Care coverage updated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reviewed</td>
<td>07/11/2013</td>
<td>Coverage changed to same for all LOB. Some ICD-10 added.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewed</td>
<td>05/22/2014</td>
<td>Reviewed. CMS coverage verified.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reviewed</td>
<td>05/28/2015</td>
<td>No changes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reviewed</td>
<td>06/09/2016</td>
<td>Updated CMS information. Removed “garment”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reviewed</td>
<td>05/16/2017</td>
<td>Added list of diagnoses covered.</td>
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</table>

**REFERENCES:**

The following scientific references were utilized in the formulation of this medical policy. SWHP will continue to review clinical evidence related to this policy and may modify it at a later date based upon the evolution of the published clinical evidence. Should additional scientific studies become available and they are not included in the list, please forward the reference(s) to SWHP so the information can be reviewed by the Medical Coverage Policy Committee (MCPC) and the Quality Improvement Committee (QIC) to determine if a modification of the policy is in order.


