

SIGVARIS



When Diabetic Patients Need  
Compression Socks

## When Diabetic Patients Need Compression Socks

As someone diagnosed with diabetes, you have been working closely with your physician, diabetic educator and pharmacist on how to best take care of your health with an important emphasis on your legs and feet. You have been told to inspect your feet and legs daily and you may even need to wear special shoes and socks specifically designed for diabetic patients.

People with diabetes often have circulation problems that can cause peripheral edema (swelling) in their feet, ankles and legs. There are many causes of peripheral edema, not necessarily related to diabetes, such as standing or sitting for long periods of time, physical inactivity, heredity, pregnancy, surgery and trauma and some illnesses. Peripheral edema can also be associated with more serious conditions – many of which can be associated with diabetes complications such as heart disease, venous insufficiency, and kidney disease. Certain diabetes medications can also cause edema.

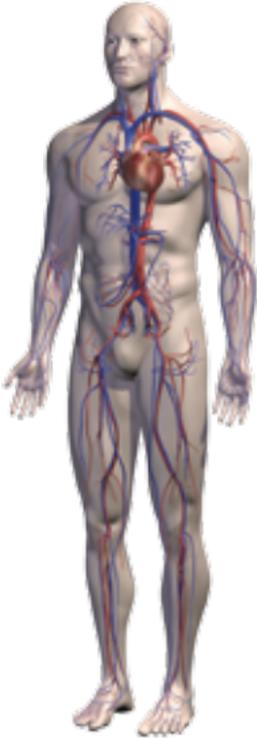
Did you know there is a difference between a diabetic sock and a diabetic **compression** sock? New research<sup>1</sup> shows that, for many diabetic patients, compression socks can help keep legs and feet healthy, as well as allow the patient to have a more active lifestyle. Wearing graduated compression socks and hosiery has been a mainstay for reducing and maintaining edema in people since the 1950s.

Peripheral Edema is normally caused by something known as *Venous Insufficiency*. The information in this brochure is designed to help you and your physician make an informed decision to whether wearing diabetic compression socks is right for you.

<sup>1</sup> Wu MD, Stephanie, et al. Control of Lower Extremity Edema in Persons with Diabetes with Mild Compression Socks: A Pilot Study. 2011.

## Understanding Venous Insufficiency

Here is a brief breakdown of the circulatory system to help you understand Venous Insufficiency and how it can lead to swelling in your legs.



### Arteries and Veins

The circulatory system is comprised of arteries and veins. Arteries carry oxygen-rich blood, pumped by the heart, throughout the body. The veins are responsible for carrying the deoxygenated blood (and some waste) back to the lungs and heart for recirculation. The combined action of the foot and calf muscle act as a pump to aid in this upward flow against the pull of gravity.

### Venous Insufficiency

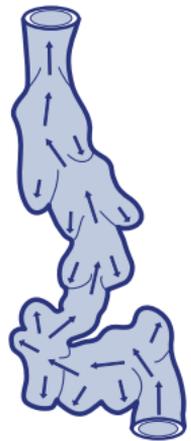
Vein walls can lose elasticity due to pressure build up within the vessel and the effects of gravity. Within the vein are small valves that open to aid in the blood flow toward the lungs and heart and close to prevent blood from reversing its flow, known as *reflux*. When the walls become weak, the valves pull apart and pressure builds causing Venous Insufficiency. This insufficiency can progress and develop into more serious lower extremity conditions. Many diabetics suffer from symptoms of Venous Insufficiency.

Normal Vein



Blood flows up one way through normal valves

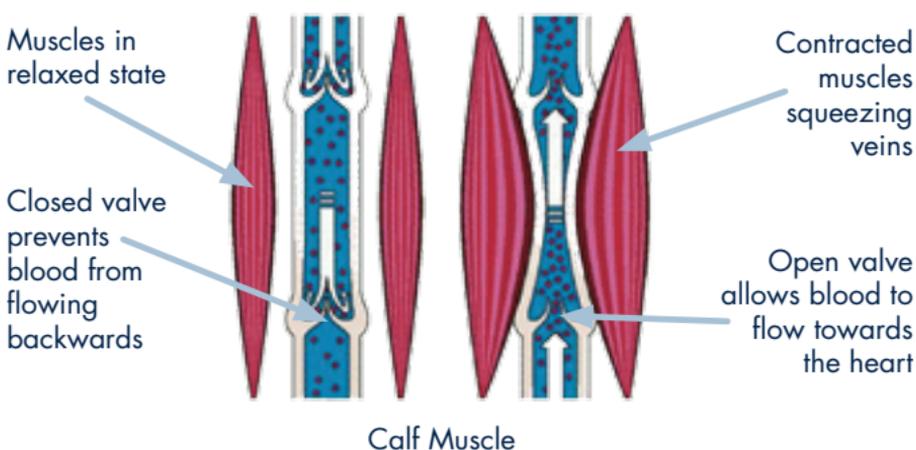
Abnormal Vein



Blood flows both ways through damaged valves

## How Do Compression Socks Help Venous Insufficiency?

For decades, graduated compression socks and hosiery have been proven to effectively promote venous blood flow by providing a gentle graduated support to leg veins and valves. A calf-length compression stocking goes over the calf muscle to be most effective. This gentle “squeeze” helps the vein walls return to their normal state, allowing the valves to properly function, thus aiding the blood flow back toward the lungs and heart.



Graduated compression socks and hosiery come in different levels of compression, known as *millimeters of mercury* (expressed as *mmHg*) and, for diabetics, should be worn under the direction of a physician. A mild level (up to 25mmHg) of graduated compression will help reduce the symptoms of swelling, tired and achy legs, spider and varicose veins and other leg discomfort. Higher levels of compression are a noted caution or contraindication for a diabetic patient<sup>2</sup>. Your doctor can help determine the correct amount of compression to help reduce the swelling in your legs.

<sup>2</sup> Stemmer MD, Robert. Strategies of Treatment by Compression and Mobilisation. Switzerland: Ganzoni & Cie, 1995. Print.

## Did You Know: Diabetics Have Higher Risk of DVT?



Diabetics are at an increased risk of developing blood clots (known as Deep Vein Thrombosis or DVT). The cause of a DVT is influenced by three factors:

- thickness of the blood
- rate of the blood flow
- quality of the vessel wall

High glucose (sugar) levels can result in dehydration, and dehydration thickens the blood, which can help lead to the development of a blood clot.

A DVT can lead to two complications: First, a DVT can break loose and travel into the lungs (known as a pulmonary embolism or PE), causing symptoms resembling a heart attack (shortness of breath, chest pain, rapid pulse). A PE can even lead to death. However, if the DVT can be prevented, the risk of PE is eliminated. *The Center for Disease Control recommends wearing graduated compression socks to help prevent DVT.*

Another complication of a DVT, known as Post-Thrombotic Syndrome (PTS), is a long-term condition (skin changes, ulcers, and other painful symptoms) greatly affecting the quality of life. Clinical evidence supports the use of graduated compression stockings to help prevent the development of DVT. Talk with your doctor regarding this risk and what else you can do to reduce it.



## Diabetic Socks vs. SIGVARIS Diabetic Compression Socks

With so much emphasis placed on proper diabetic footwear, it is important that your diabetic socks have the correct size, fit, fiber and construction. Most diabetic socks are soft, provide padding on the sole of the foot, and should conform to the foot/leg without wrinkles. They may be seamless or have a “flat seam” against the toes/foot. The fibers should wear evenly, instead of leaving thin spots where friction can occur and offer moisture-wicking properties to minimize the risk of infection and blisters.



SIGVARIS Diabetic Compression Socks offer all these same features, **plus** the benefit of 18–25mmHg graduated compression. They are designed with the diabetic patient in mind. This soft, padded sock is made with DriRelease® yarns with FreshGuard® to wick away moisture and provide odor control. Extra attention has been made to provide a flat interior seam on the toe guard, as well as a more comfortable top band. Unlike some diabetic socks, which are measured by shoe size, SIGVARIS socks provide a custom-like fit by measuring your ankle, calf and lower leg length to determine your size. Look at this difference as “medicine for your legs!”

If circulation is a concern, consider SIGVARIS Diabetic Compression Socks as an effective alternative to traditional diabetic socks.

## Who Should Wear SIGVARIS Diabetic Compression Socks?

You should talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or diabetic educator about SIGVARIS Diabetic Compression Socks, as they could be the right choice for you if:

- You have been advised to change your diet and increase your physical activity
- If you are experiencing swelling in your feet, ankles or legs
- If you are currently pregnant and are experiencing gestational diabetes

## Which Diabetic Patients Should Not Wear Compression?

Most diabetic patients will benefit from less swelling when wearing SIGVARIS Diabetic Compression Socks. However, not all diabetic patients should wear compression. Talk with your doctor. If you have severe arterial insufficiency, a compression sock may not be right for you. And, if you experience any discomfort while wearing this garment, please remove it and consult your doctor.



# DIABETIC COMPRESSION SOCKS

*For Men and Women*

SIGVARIS

**Compression:**

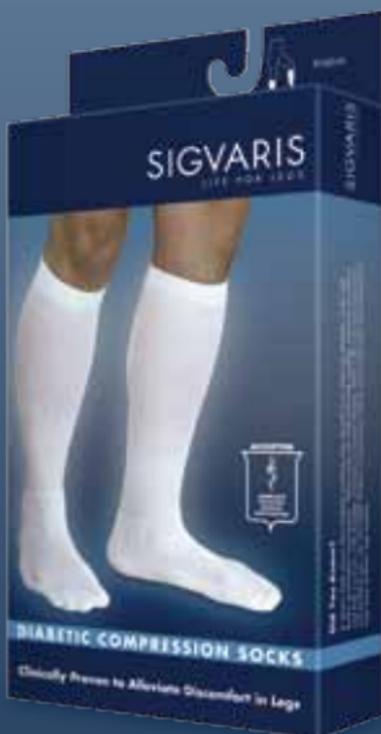
18–25mmHg

**Color:**

White (00)

**Features & Benefits:**

- Increases circulation
- Non-binding band
- Flat toe seam
- Soft with extra padding on foot
- DriRelease for moisture wicking and FreshGuard for odor control
- True graduated compression
- Measured sizing for accurate fit
- Latex free



602C Diabetic  
Compression Socks



*Clinically Proven  
to Alleviate Discomfort in Legs*

SIGVARIS is proud of our quality products, and we invite you to let us know your experience. “Like” SIGVARIS Diabetic Compression Socks on Facebook to learn more about managing leg health with diabetes.

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