3M Science. Applied to Life.™

3M™ Coban™ 2 Layer Compression Systems

Practical Tips for Lymphoedema Application

General Tips

- 3M™ Coban™ 2 Layer Compression Systems are to be used under the supervision of a health care professional. Prior to initiating compression it is important to ensure adequate arterial blood flow. Patients with known arterial insufficiency, decompensated heart insufficiency or diabetes with advanced small vessel disease may not tolerate compression.
- Coban 2 Layer Compression Systems are single-use only and should be kept dry when worn. Waterproof protectors are available online or in pharmacies and may be worn to protect bandages from water when washing.
- For effective compression therapy, apply bandages to a relaxed muscle/limb, in the correct anatomical position.
- Avoid wrapping the comfort foam layer with too much tension. Hold the roll close to the limb and apply this layer with just enough tension to conform smoothly. Stretching the material onto the skin increases the mechanical grip and friction on the skin.
- When applying the compression layer, always hold the roll close to the anatomy throughout the application for controlled, even compression.
- When applying bandages across the ankle, always ensure that the patient's foot is supported at a 90° angle to the leg. This helps prevent "digging" into the tissues which may cause discomfort.
- To help stop bandages from rolling down, apply the comfort layer twice around the top of the limb.

Practical Tips for Lymphoedema Application

- For arms, fingers, upper body, toes and scrotum applications, use Coban 2 Lite bandages only.
- To avoid tightening around base of fingers, apply the bandage without tension with 50% turns around the digit and mould. Also apply bandages with fingers flexed and relaxed – this makes application more comfortable. Avoid stretching/pressing the web spacer too hard when applying to the hand.
- Always leave the fingers/toe tips and nail bed free when applying bandages to the fingers/toes (individually) so that colour change can be assessed. Blue/White = reapply!
- For additional stability and comfort in the elbow crease and behind the knee, apply Cavilon No Sting Barrier Film to clean, dry skin and allow to dry. Add an extra piece of comfort foam layer applied longitudinally to reduce friction in this area (refer to template on back page).
- Maintain neutral arm position with thumb pointing up when bandaging arm.
- Apply Cavilon No Sting Barrier Film interdigitally prior to toe boot technique and between skin folds and allow to dry. Use pieces of comfort foam layer as toe separators or between skin folds to prevent maceration.
- When applying comfort foam layer and compression layer to the knee and elbow, always ensure the joints are slightly flexed and the middle of the bandage covers the articulating surface (avoid bandage edges along crease).

- Use 3M™ Cavilon™ No Sting Barrier Film to protect skin from maceration and friction such as peri wound and skin folds.
- Coban 2 Layer Compression Systems are cohesive and will stick to themselves. Apply a thin layer of moisturiser over the finished application to reduce tackiness of the bandage.
- Wearing a stretchy knee high stocking or sock can also help with slipping footwear on more easily. If the patient has a bilateral condition requiring bandaging on both legs, cover one or both with stockinette or similar product to prevent their legs sticking together.
- The layers of Coban 2 Layer Compression System "bond" to each other, so scissors may be required for bandage removal. Use bandage scissors. Cut down the inside of limbs away from bony prominences. Use cream on the tips of scissors to aid removal.
- If any gaps are detected in the compression layer, you may apply additional pieces of compression layer material at full stretch.

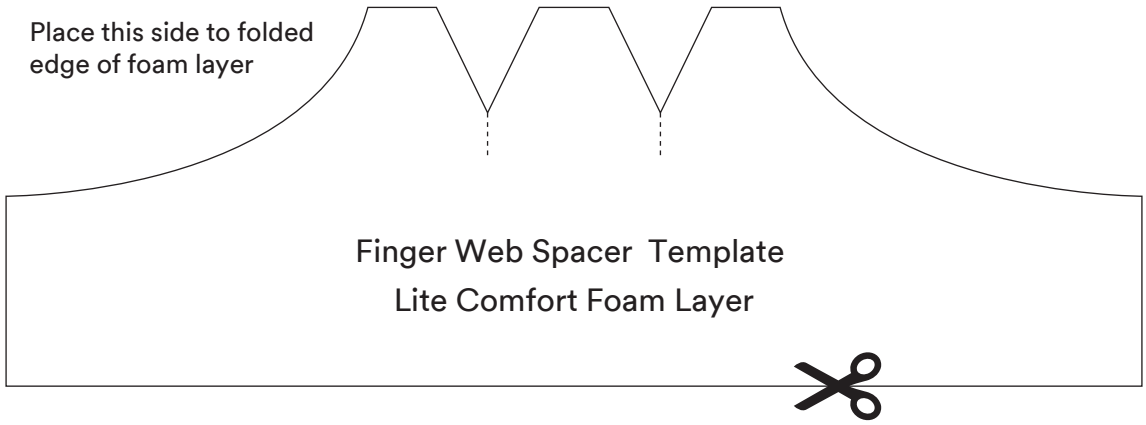
- For additional comfort in the thumb webbing, apply a double layer of comfort foam layer.
- To soften areas of fibrosis, put an extra strip of compression layer at full stretch over the top of the first layer for extra stiffness.
- For Lymphorrhea, protect skin with Cavilon No Sting Barrier Film and use a foam wound dressing such as Tegaderm™ High Performance Foam Non-Adhesive Dressing before applying the comfort foam layer. Reapply bandages more frequently as required until Lymphorrhea is controlled.
- Apply thin layer of moisturiser such as Cavilon Durable Barrier Cream over finished application to reduce tackiness. Apply stockinette or similar product over the arm bandage to aid clothing donning and doffing.
- To remove hand bandages, cut up to the metacarpal joint then ask the patient/client to remove the finger bandages. Finger bandage scissors are also available.
- If a fungal infection occurs, use an antifungal powder. Antifungal creams are not recommended due to the potential to add moisture and create maceration. If an area of ulceration develops, follow your protocols for wound management.

Visit 3M Health Care Academy for application videos and additional education.
www.3m.com.au/hca | www.3m.co.nz/hca

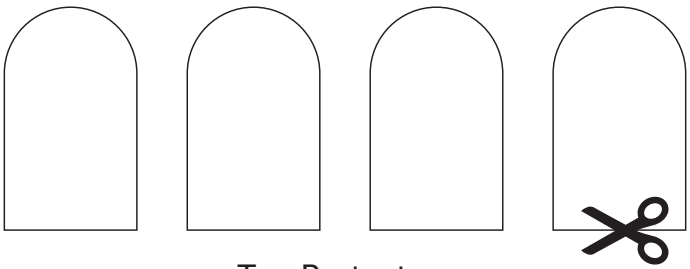
Hand and arm application templates

Cut to shape using Comfort Foam layer





For toe boot technique



Toe Protectors

Trim to size using folded comfort layer

Solventum Medical Surgical

Solventum Operations Pty Ltd
Suite 3.01, Building A, The Park
5 Talavera Road, Macquarie Park
NSW 2113
Phone 1800 945 183
www.Coban2.com.au

KCI New Zealand Unlimited
Suite 1701, Level 17, PwC Tower
15 Customs Street West
Auckland Central, Auckland 1010
Phone 09 884 2001
www.Coban2.co.nz

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