

# Continuing Education Series

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## Compression Garments

Discussion:

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The Importance of Selecting the Correct Compression Garment



inspired by innovation

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## Compression Garments

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An essential requirement following Facial Aesthetic and Reconstructive Plastic Surgery, Lipoplasty, Breast Augmentation Mammoplasty, and Abdominoplasty is proper compression, which is usually provided by means of an area specific compression garment. Surgical results and post operative recovery are greatly affected by the correct garment selection, proper garment fit, and patient compliance.

This continuing education article will assist in understanding the importance of selecting the correct compression garment; demonstrate how to correctly measure to determine proper garment sizing; and define the necessity of educating staff and patients for proper garment selection and patient compliance.

### Benefits of Compression Garments

The need for tissue compression following surgery relates to the trauma and insult to the underlying body structures involved. Blood vessels, lymphatic channels, and connective fibers attaching skin to deeper structures can all be altered, severed, bruised, or removed during surgery. Bruising, edema, and discomfort are the post-operative results of this trauma. The art of proper compression can assist in lessening these post-operative conditions and further reducing the risk of possible complications and pain.

- Edema is significantly reduced by compressing and flushing potentially harmful body fluids away from the skin.
- Bruising is minimized by compression on small blood vessels and capillaries.
- The possible risk of infection is reduced when potentially harmful fluids are not allowed to accumulate.
- General body contouring and skin retraction is aided by firm compression of the skin during the healing process.
- Comfort is improved by compression provided support.

### What to Look For In a Compression Garment

There are many different body specific styles, types and manufacturer's of compression garments available for multiple surgical procedures. With so many choices there is a challenge in knowing what to look for in a compression garment to provide required post-operative benefits and comfort to ensure patient compliance.

**Fabric** is the most important element to look for in a compression garment. The fabric must provide the proper stretch and pressure to evenly compress the body; actually molding to every curve like a soft, second skin while allowing the patient to move without restriction. Cutting

edge textile science incorporated by Marena® ComfortWear® featuring the new fabric technology **F5** (Fabric 5), with performance characteristics not found in other compression garment fabrics such as:

- 1) Power/Stretch**...stretches both North/South and East/West providing even compression that does not bind or pull;
- 2) Softness**...providing less stiffness for smooth comfortable compression;
- 3) Absorption & Wicking**...that absorbs body moisture and pulls it away from the skin promoting evaporation; decreasing the possibility of skin irritation, rashes and infection;
- 4) Anti-Microbial**...agents incorporated into the fabric to fight odor, mold and mildew caused by bacteria; and
- 5) Durability**...the inter-locking of special premium yarns maintains garment shape and provides size memory throughout extended wear and washings.

**Construction** must limit skin contact with any hard or rough surfaces. Seams must be on the outside of the garment. Labels must not come in contact with skin. Zippers and fasteners must be shielded from contact with the skin by a soft cushioned fabric.

**Antimicrobial** protection built-in to inhibit the growth of bacteria, microbes, mold and mildew.

**Convenience** of design to accommodate body functions and accessibility to allow for ease in putting the garment on and taking the garment off.

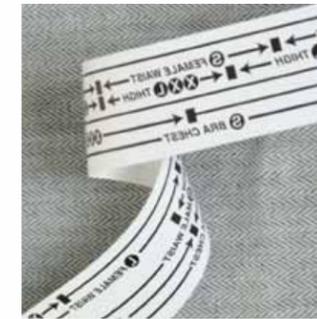
**Allergy-Free** fabric which does not contain latex will eliminate a possible allergic reaction or an allergic response.

### Measurements and Sizing

Sizing has been one of the most challenging issues for both the patient and the medical staff in measuring and selecting the correct garment. Properly sizing patients is a necessity and is prone to error. One of the most frequent reasons for lack of patient compliance are complaints of discomfort; because they are wearing the wrong size or incorrect garment.

Measuring patients for compression garments can be simplified with less margin of error by using the *Marena Patient Measuring System*. Using the provided measuring tape around the proper body zone and noting the indicated size on the tape eliminates guess work and frequently can be done without the need to refer to a sizing chart.

Even though much of the measuring guess work can be eliminated by using the specially designed tape measure provided by the *Marena Patient Measuring System*, there can still be sizing questions and challenges to overcome.



Left: A specially designed tape measure included in the *Marena Patient Measuring System* provided by Marena®.

- For patients that are in between sizes it is advised to select the larger size; eliminating garment stress and patient discomfort.
- Patients over 5'8" tall requiring a full body compression garment with a bra may obtain better compression and a more comfortable fit by using separate properly fitting garments rather than one ill fitting and uncomfortable garment.
- Procedures requiring full body compression with a bra can be difficult if the body area measurements are different. If there is a difference of one size between body areas it is recommended that the larger size be selected. This will usually not compromise compression. If there is a difference of more than one size between body areas; separate garments are suggested for adequate compression. If there is a difference of two to three sizes between different body areas then a custom tailored garment is recommended.

### Patient Compliance and Understanding

Current fashion trends over the past decade have promoted clothing that is loose and comfortable with minimal structure, causing patients to approach wearing a constricted garment with great concern and uncertainty. The necessity of wearing a compression garment for an extended period of time requires patient understanding to promote compliance. It is helpful to involve patients in the process of garment sizing and selection, explaining how compression provided by the garment can affect recovery and surgical results and how specific measurements are necessary for proper garment sizing provides interest and allure.

A straight forward explanation of the duration and length of time the compression garment must be worn helps in the understanding of the importance of the compression it provides. Convenience of multiple garments and ease of garment care should be included in patient education to help eliminate specific garment related concerns. A review of written, take home, post-operative instructions providing guidelines for how long the compression garment should be worn, when it can be

removed, and for what length of time it can be removed eliminates delayed questions or confusion. Patient understanding and compliance can be assisted by inclusion of the following:

- Involve the patient in the sizing process by explaining the *Marena Patient Measuring System* and how it is used. Explain specific body zones that will be measured to determine proper garment size.
- Assist the patient with the correct way to put on the compression garment; if needed, stretch the garment using the open flat surface of the hand, then releasing the garment into place.
- Explain the need and advantage of multiple garments for staged wear and how to correctly launder garments.
- Cautioning to avoid long fingernails from puncturing the fabric, to always pull using seams, fasteners, and double layers of fabric using the flat surface of the hand.

### Staff Training

Your INAMED Aesthetics Sales Representative will provide the necessary tools (product catalog, patient literature and measuring tape), and training of office staff members to ensure a thorough understanding of properly measuring for accurate sizing; appropriate garment selection and ordering through Customer Care at 800.624.4261 or online at [www.myinamed.com](http://www.myinamed.com).

### Conclusion

Currently, the most frequently performed cosmetic surgical procedure is lipoplasty; requiring the use of post-operative compression garments for an extended period of time to achieve the best possible aesthetic result. For maximum benefit, the best quality compression garments in a variety of styles and sizes is required to meet the challenge of proper sizing, patient comfort, and compliance. A staff trained in understanding garment selection and sizing and the necessity of patient education can be a valuable asset to every plastic surgery practice. ■