

Support bandages and stockinette

In England and Wales over £16.8 million is spent annually on support bandages and stockinette (ePACT January to March 2016). Support bandages and stockinette are generally used as short term interventions for mild sprains and strains or in dermatological conditions, e.g. use of elasticated viscose stockinette for wet or dry wrapping in eczema.¹

Key recommendations

- Support bandages should not be used in place of retention bandages for securing dressings, as retention bandages are more cost-effective.
- Elasticated tubular bandages have a limited role in chronic wound management. Use should generally be short term in the management of sprains and strains. Where they are indicated, consider prescribing a less-costly brand (see bulletin), or directing people to purchase them over-the-counter where appropriate.
- Elasticated viscose stockinette does not provide support and is generally used in managing skin conditions or for dressing retention.¹ Reserve their use in dressing retention for areas that are difficult to dress with retention bandages (which are generally more cost effective), and consider prescribing a less-costly brand (see bulletin).
- Elasticated stockinette garments are also available for use in managing skin conditions or for dressing retention.¹ They are a more costly option, so should be selected if other options are unsuitable or if they offer an advantage that would support concordance and treatment efficacy.
- When prescribing Skinnies® branded garments care should be taken not to select Skinnies WEB® products, unless they are for use in managing epidermolysis bullosa or burns.²
- Tubular bandages and stockinette (including garments) are generally reusable. The manufacturer's instructions regarding washing and drying differ and should be checked for individual products.
- Support bandages and stockinette are usually used as short term interventions, therefore should not be prescribed as repeats.
- Consider the potential latex content of bandages and related items when prescribing for people who are allergic to latex.
- Prescribe the minimum quantity of dressings necessary to meet people's needs, to help minimise wastage and stockpiling.

Supporting evidence

The evidence base for the use of wet and dry bandaging in managing eczema in children is weak, however experts do support their use in some cases.³

High compression multicomponent bandaging (which may include a support bandage layer) should be routinely used for the treatment of venous leg ulcers as it improves healing rates.⁴

Simple elastic bandages or elasticated tubular bandages also have an accepted role in the management of sprains and injuries.⁵

Savings

Table 1. Potential national cost savings for support bandages and stockinette supplied via FP10 (ePACT January to March 2016)

Annual savings for switching 25% of stockinette to light-weight conforming (retention) bandages	£2,246,461
Annual savings for switching 25% of support bandages to light-weight conforming (retention) bandages	£808,537
Annual saving for switching Tubigrip® and Tubifast 2-way stretch® (including garments*) to least costly alternative of same type	£1,091,944

*Gloves excluded as the cost variation differs.

Data on spend for bandages supplied through direct procurement are not readily available so cannot be included in the potential savings figures.

Additional resources available: <https://www.prescqipp.info/resources/category/319-wound-care-support-bandages-and-stockinette>



Bulletin



Data pack



Searches

References

1. MIMS. Accessed 6/1/16 via <http://www.mims.co.uk>
2. Skinnies WEB®. Accessed 16/1/16 via <http://www.skinniesuk.com/category/web>
3. National Collaborating Centre for Women's and Children's Health. Atopic eczema in under 12s: diagnosis and management (full guideline) [CG57]. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. Issued December 2007. Accessed January 2016 via <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg57/evidence/full-guideline-196612237>
4. Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) Guideline no.120. Management of chronic venous leg ulcers. August 2010. Accessed 30/12/15 via <http://sign.ac.uk/pdf/sign120.pdf>
5. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Clinical Knowledge Summary, Sprains and strains, last revised April 2015. Accessed 30/12/15 via <http://cks.nice.org.uk/sprains-and-strains>

Contact help@prescqipp.info with any queries or comments related to the content of this document.

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