

VENICE PLASTIC SURGERY

A.E. HAAS, M.D.

Cosmetic, Reconstructive, Face, Breast, and Hand Surgery

Wounds - Wound wrapping, Ace bandages

Proper bandaging is a repeat topic because it is such a common problem. We all think about errors in medication as the cause of treatment mishaps. However, in wound patients the problem may be improper bandaging. The appropriate application of a bandage is an art, a learned skill and is often used improperly. Even some nurses and doctors do not apply dressings correctly.

The most common error is the misapplication of an Ace type or other elastic bandage wrap. When there is a knee wound for example the patient will use an elastic bandage around just the knee. This will act as a tourniquet. Below the level of the wrap will swell. This will hurt the healing process and may even cause new wounds in the swollen area.

If compression is needed at the knee level a bandage must start at the toes. The wrap should be the tightest at the toes and be wrapped with decreasing tension as you wrap up toward the knee. Always wrap from as far out as possible towards the heart. The wrap should be least tight at the knee area in this case. This may not seem right to you but this is how it must be done to prevent the tourniquet effect. Start from the fingers and wrap up towards the arm. Start from the toes and wrap up to where the injured area is located for the leg.

The same is true for support hose usage. Some have tight constrictive bands at the top. I think they should be cut with a scissor to prevent constriction. Occasionally we ask patients to get long athletic socks as soccer players wear. Again we stress that they be careful to avoid all stockings with tight bands at the top.

The same principal should be applied for lesser bandages on a finger or on the hand. You must avoid the tourniquet effect. People with circulation problems, diseases as diabetes and especially those with heart problems are more critical. If you are not sure then see your wound care doctor.

**The above represents the opinion of A. E. Haas, M.D.
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Just call us directly. No referral needed unless required by your insurance company

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