Instructions for leg swelling

Swelling of your operated area, extending to the thigh and leg is not unusual after surgery, including areas of “black and blue”. These instructions should help to overcome the swelling:

1. Use elastic stockings during the day. *Have someone* put the stockings on when you get up from bed in the morning and have them removed at night. If you were not provided with the stockings at the hospital, please use a pair of support socks that can be bought in a medical supply store or department store.

2. Exercise your toes, feet, and ankles up and down (“pump”) for a few minutes every hour. This exercise should be done vigorously and not too fast. Count to three between extension and flexion of your ankles and toes.

3. Have someone massage your leg upwards from the foot to the knee, mobilizing the fluid within the tissues upwards.

4. Avoid sitting with your legs hanging down. Sit with the legs partially elevated. Again, exercise your toes, feet, and ankles frequently up and down, while you are sitting.

5. Do not stand for long periods of time. If you have to, stand repeatedly on your tiptoes.

6. After lunch lay down for an hour or so and keep on “pumping” toes, feet and ankles.

7. If the swelling persists in both legs consult your internist, as you may need a diuretic, a drug to reduce your body water content.

8. Once the swelling is gone, remove the elastic stockings in the late afternoon. *If the legs do not swell,* remove the stockings a few hours earlier on the next day, and so on. After a few days you will not need them any longer.

9. If the swelling persists despite following these instructions, particularly if the leg is swollen when you wake up in the morning, please call my office or the office of your HSS internist.

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