

Mosby's Nursing Video Skills

Procedure Guideline for Using a Sequential Compression Device

1. Gather the necessary equipment and supplies.
2. Perform hand hygiene.
3. Provide privacy.
4. Introduce yourself to the patient and family, if present.
5. Verify the health care provider's orders.
6. Identify the patient using two identifiers.
7. Explain the procedure to the patient and the reason for applying the SCDs.
8. Place the patient in the supine position with the head of the bed elevated, and raise the bed to a comfortable working height.
9. Assess the patient's legs for scratches or cuts. Make sure the patient's legs are warm. Assess for pedal and popliteal pulses. Evaluate the patient for risk factors and Virchow's triad.
10. Measure the patient's calves with a measuring tape to determine the correct size of SCD sleeve. Some thigh high SCD's sleeves require a measurement from the heel to the buttock. Compare the measurements to the size chart on the manufacturer's package.
11. Place the SCD mechanical unit on the end of the bed.
12. Remove the SCD sleeves from the plastic cover; unfold and flatten the sleeves. Refer to the manufacturer's instructions for the use of elastic stockings underneath the SCD's.
13. Arrange the first SCD sleeve under the patient's leg according to the leg position indicated on the inner lining of the sleeve. The back of the patient's ankle should line up with the ankle marking on the inner lining of the sleeve.
14. Align the back of the patient's knee with the popliteal opening on the sleeve.
15. Wrap the SCD sleeve securely around the patient's leg making sure it is smooth. Check the fit of the SCD sleeve by slipping two fingers between the patient's leg and the sleeve.
16. Attach the SCD sleeve connector to the plug on the mechanical unit. Line up the arrows on the connector with the arrows on the plug of the mechanical unit.
17. Turn on the mechanical unit. A green light indicates that the unit is functioning correctly. Monitor the functioning of the SCD through one full cycle of inflation and deflation.
18. Help the patient into a comfortable position, and place toiletries and personal items within reach.
19. Place the call light within easy reach, and make sure the patient knows how to use it to summon assistance.
20. To ensure the patient's safety, raise the appropriate number of side rails and lower the bed to the lowest position.
21. Dispose of used supplies and equipment. Leave the patient's room tidy.
22. Remove and dispose of gloves, if used. Perform hand hygiene.
23. Document and report the patient's response and expected or unexpected outcomes.

24. As follow up care, remove the SCD at least once per day as long as necessary to assess for skin breakdown and irritation.