NHS
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# Kinesio taping

## What is Kinesio tape?

Kinesio tape (KT) is a water-repellent, elastic and adhesive tape that can be worn on the skin for several days. Kinesio taping is used in lymphoedema to encourage lymphatic drainage.

## How is it applied?

Your therapist will discuss with you the best pattern and technique to use.

- Apply KT to clean dry skin.
- If a lot of hair is present, shave the area using an electric razor or use a depilatory cream first.
- Larger pieces of tape should have rounded corners.
- In general apply the tape without any tension – be careful not to stretch the tape as you apply it.
- Apply light friction to the KT to make sure that it has adhered (stuck).
- You may need assistance from a partner/friend to apply the KT. If you feel it would be beneficial then they can attend one of your appointments to be shown how to apply the tape.
- The tape will remain in place for 3-5 days and should then be removed. Leave 24-48 hours between applications.

## Initial treatment schedule

1. Your therapist will teach you how to apply the tape.
2. You will then continue to treat yourself with Kinesio tape for 6-8 weeks.
3. At the end of the 6-8 week period, extend the 24-48 hour rest period between applications, re-taping only when necessary. In this way you should be able to extend the periods between taping and reduce the frequency of taping.

## How do I look after the taped area?

- Keep the tape in place for 3-5 days. You may find that the ends start to come loose. Trimming the ends often increases the treatment time. However, when more of the tape has come loose it is no longer effective and should be removed.
- You may bath, shower and swim with the tape in place. Pat the area dry afterwards with a towel as rubbing will disturb the tape.
- Remove the tape by rolling the tape off gently in the direction of the anchor. If the tape is still secure when it is time to remove it, you can use a little oil or Vaseline to aid removal.

## Don't:

- use perfumes or body lotions over the taped area
- tape over an infected area or if the skin is broken
- tape if you have cellulitis.

Continued overleaf

## What should I look out for?

If you experience any itching, redness or irritation, remove the tape using Vaseline or oil to lift the glue and lukewarm water to ease removal. Do not re-tape if you have had an adverse reaction.

Seek advice from your therapist if your medical condition changes significantly or you are pregnant.

## Will I have any follow up?

On your last appointment you will either be given a follow-up appointment or an open appointment. Your therapist will discuss this with you.

## What if I need to continue taping?

Kinesio tape is not available on prescription. A roll of tape will be provided for the initial treatment, but if you need to continue to tape following this initial treatment you will need to purchase your own tape. Kinesio tape can be purchased from many places – your therapist can give you details of the tape used for your treatment.

## Contact us

If you have any questions please contact:

**Lymphoedema Clinic**

Mon – Fri 8am – 4pm
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For further information and support please visit our website:

www.royalcornwall.nhs.uk/services/therapies/occupational-therapy/lymphoedema/

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690

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