

# KAATSU Information Sheet for Medical Professionals

Dear Colleague,

Your patient has expressed interest in KAATSU, a modified blood flow training modality developed in Japan and refined through extensive research. This sheet provides an overview of KAATSU's principles, safety considerations, protocols, and potential applications. KAATSU is not intended as a substitute for medical advice; we recommend evaluating its suitability based on the patient's individual health profile.

## What is KAATSU?

KAATSU is a patented blood flow modification technique using pneumatic bands to gently modify venous return while maintaining arterial inflow. Unlike traditional BFR (which often involves occlusion), KAATSU employs repeated cycles of inflation and deflation (Cycle Mode) at low pressures, promoting vascular elasticity, hormonal responses (e.g., growth hormone, VEGF, nitric oxide), and reduced inflammation (e.g., decreased C-reactive protein). It has been studied in over 2,000 cardiac rehabilitation patients (2004–2014) and is used for rehabilitation, performance enhancement, and wellness. For a detailed introduction, see: [What is KAATSU Training?](#)

## Key Distinctions from Traditional BFR:

- KAATSU avoids full occlusion, focusing on safe, progressive engorgement of capillaries.
- It emphasizes Cycle Mode (30-second inflations) over constant pressure, reducing risks like nerve compression or thrombosis.
- Protocols prioritize hydration, capillary refill time (CRT) checks (1–3 seconds), and gradual progression, making it suitable for diverse populations, including the elderly and those in rehabilitation.

## Safety Guidelines and Contraindications:

KAATSU is generally safe when protocols are followed, but requires medical clearance in certain cases. Always ensure patients are well-hydrated (clear urine) and monitor for discomfort. Use the [KAATSU Pressure Calculator](#) for personalized pressure settings.

- **Absolute Contraindications:** Acute deep vein thrombosis (DVT), pulmonary embolism, uncontrolled hypertension (>160/100 mmHg), active infections, open wounds, or pregnancy without gynecological approval (avoid abdominal pressure).
- **Relative Contraindications (Require Monitoring):** History of stents, pacemakers, neuropathies (e.g., chemotherapy-induced), Raynaud's disease, or post-surgical states (wait 2 weeks or until wounds heal; use contralateral application if needed). For oncology patients (e.g., post-lymph node removal), avoid affected limbs to prevent lymphedema risks.

## Informational Sheet

- **General Precautions:** Start with Low Pressure (e.g., 100–150 SKU); use only Cycle Mode; check CRT (press palm/thigh; color returns in 1–2 seconds). Remove bands immediately if skin turns pale, blue, or clammy, or if lightheadedness occurs. Not recommended for those under 18 without supervision due to growth plate concerns.

### **Standard Protocols (Based on Research and Clinical Experience):**

Protocols are progressive, starting low and slow. Sessions: 1–3 Cycle sets (arms first, then legs), once daily. Maximum: 20 minutes per limb.

- **Orthopedics/Rehabilitation (e.g., Rotator Cuff Repair, Knee Replacement):** Prehab: 1–3 Cycle sets daily, Low Pressure, gentle movements (e.g., hand clenches, toe curls). Rehab: Start post-2 weeks; focus on unaffected limb for cross-transfer effects. Benefits: Faster recovery, reduced atrophy.
- **Cardiology (e.g., Stents, Pacemakers):** Arms first; Low Pressure Cycle Mode only (1 set/week 1, build to 3). Monitor CRT and hydration. Benefits: Improved vascular elasticity; studied in 2,000+ cardiac patients. Avoid Constant Mode.
- **Neurology (e.g., Neuropathy, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's):** Gentle Cycle Mode (1–3 sets daily); focus on relaxation or light stretches. Benefits: Potential increase in BDNF (brain-derived neurotrophic factor) and alpha waves; may aid neuropathies indirectly. No guarantees; monitor for pain.
- **General Wellness/Age-Related (e.g., Over 60, Sedentary):** Low Pressure; 1–3 sets with walking or stretches. Benefits: Hormonal boost (e.g., growth hormone without microtrauma), weight loss support via KAATSU Walking. For fertility/hormones: Daily Cycles may enhance testosterone/VEGF, but lacks U.S. FDA claims.

### **Research and Evidence:**

- Over 40 years of Japanese research; U.S. applications since 2014. Key studies: Hormonal responses (e.g., growth hormone surges); vascular benefits (VEGF increase); inflammation reduction (CRP decrease). Peer-reviewed in journals like *Journal of Applied Physiology* (cardiac rehab). No major adverse events in compliant users. Differentiates from BFR by avoiding occlusion risks. For a concise evidence overview, see: [Evidence Brief](#).

### **Recommendations for Your Patient:**

Assess based on history (e.g., vascular risks). If approved, advise starting under supervision. Monitor blood pressure and symptoms. KAATSU complements therapy but does not replace it.

For further details or collaboration, contact KAATSU Education at [info@kaatsu-education.com](mailto:info@kaatsu-education.com)

Thank you for your consideration.

### **Robert Heiduk**

Founder of KAATSU Education Academy