



Caring for venous leg ulcers

- Compression bandaging is the best way to treat venous ulcers
- Your doctor or nurse needs to check the circulation in your leg before starting compression
- 60% of ulcers will heal in 12 weeks with adequate compression



This is a guide only and does not replace clinical judgment

References:

Royal College of Nursing (RCN), *Clinical practice guidelines: The management of patients with venous leg ulcers*. 2006 London: RCN Institute, Centre for Evidence based Nursing, University of York.

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Venous Leg Ulcers

Information for clients, family and carers



Venous Leg Ulcers

What is a venous leg ulcer?

- Venous ulcers are the most common type of leg ulcer. They are caused as the result of damaged veins
- Veins drain blood from the feet and lower legs back to the heart. Damage to these veins results in swollen, tender legs which may feel dry and itchy and have mottled brown staining. They usually occur on the lower third of the leg. Pain is usually relieved by elevating the legs above the heart

Risk Factors

- Varicose veins
- Blood clots
- Fractures or injuries
- Obesity
- Sitting or standing for long periods

Compression stockings /socks

- Compression stockings should be measured and fitted by a health professional
- Stockings usually may be taken off at night but reapply first thing in the morning
- Stockings should feel firm but not tight
- There is a wide range of equipment available to help put on stockings
- Remove compression stockings immediately if toes become purple or blue, if swelling of your leg occurs above or below the stockings, or you develop severe pain. Seek advice from your health professional



How to prevent venous leg ulcers

✓ Do

- Wear compression stockings for life to reduce the risk of new leg ulcers
- Replace your compression stockings every six months
- Remove all wrinkles from stockings. Wearing rubber gloves may help
- Walk or exercise your ankles and calf muscles regularly
- Elevate legs above heart level for 30 minutes at least once a day
- Apply moisturiser to keep skin in good condition
- Check your feet and legs daily

✗ Don't

- Do not cross your legs
- Do not wear watches or jewellery that can damage the stocking
- Do not fold over stockings at the top