

**This is a guide only and does not
replace clinical judgment**

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Arterial Leg Ulcers

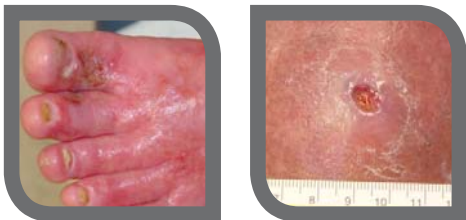
Information for clients, family and carers



Arterial Leg Ulcer

What is an arterial leg ulcer?

- An arterial leg ulcer is a sore or break in the skin as a result of blocked or hardened arteries
- Arteries supply blood which carry oxygen and nutrients to the muscles and skin of the legs and feet
- If circulation is poor the leg is starved of oxygen and nutrients and the skin is more likely to break down
- They usually occur over the toes, shin or pressure areas of the feet and legs
- They may cause severe pain at rest, which often increases with leg elevation or walking



Risk Factors

- Smoking
- High blood pressure
- A history of heart disease
- Obesity
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Diabetes
- A high cholesterol level

How are they managed?

- Consult a health professional with skills in wound management
- Blood supply and healing may be improved by:
 - keeping your feet and legs warm
 - gentle leg and ankle exercises
- Follow your health professional's advice on how to manage pain

How can you help prevent an arterial leg ulcer?



✓ Do

- Gently exercise to increase blood flow
- Eat a healthy diet
- Inspect feet and legs daily – a mirror may help
- Quit smoking
- Control diabetes
- Control your cholesterol and blood pressure levels
- Maintain an ideal weight
- Wear well fitting shoes and orthotics as necessary
- Avoid injury. Take care to avoid bumps and sharp corners
- Extreme care is needed when cutting toe nails—preferably ask a podiatrist

✗ Don't

- Do not sit or stand in one position for a long time or cross your legs