



Your Guide to Wound Care

ARTERIAL LEG ULCERS

You have an arterial leg ulcer, which is caused by a wound that cannot heal properly because of arterial disease.

Your arterial system supplies oxygen and nutrient rich blood from your heart and lungs to the muscles and skin of your body, including your legs and feet. If you have poor circulation because of arterial disease (which can have many causes), your legs and feet are starved of oxygen and nutrients and the body cannot heal wounds in a normal way.

Please review the following reasons why you may develop an ulcer:

- Restrictions to blood vessels (peripheral vascular disease)
- Diabetes mellitus
- Renal failure
- High blood pressure
- Hardening of the arteries
- Thickening of the arteries, due to the buildup of fatty materials
- Trauma
- Limited joint mobility
- Increased age

MANAGING YOUR ARTERIAL ULCER

Knowing what caused your arterial ulcer will help you manage your wound and prevent future arterial ulcers from forming. In order to be YOUR healthiest, you should:



1. **Exercise daily.** Walking helps your arterial ulcer by increasing circulation to your legs and feet. Your nurse can help create an exercise plan with you.
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2. **Check your feet and legs daily for signs of ulcers.** Protect your legs and feet from injury. Avoid socks & shoes that are tight.
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3. **Keeping your legs hanging down** to help gravity deliver blood to the legs and feet helps relieve pain. Make sure you sit in a chair that does not cut off your circulation behind your knees.
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4. **If you are diabetic, monitor and control your sugars.** Your nurse can help you learn to do this.
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5. **Eat a balanced diet,** high in protein, which keeps your skin strong and helps wounds heal.
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6. **If you smoke, QUIT!** It's bad for blood flow, your skin, and your body. Your team will talk to you about options that will help you kick the habit! It's truly one of the best things you can do for your body at any age.
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