



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

References:

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Arterial Leg Ulcers

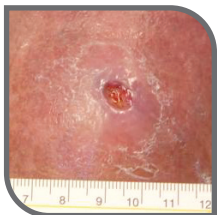
Information for **clients, family and carers**



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 carries 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
- Stress
- 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
- Ask your health professional about referral to a vascular specialist
- Consult your health professional on an appropriate dressing that is low-adherent and protects the wound and surrounding skin
- 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
- Inspect feet and legs daily – a mirror may help
- Keep legs and feet warm to help circulation
- Control diabetes, 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
- Do not smoke

