



Caring for venous leg ulcers

- Compression treatment is the best way to heal venous ulcers
- Your health professional needs to check the circulation in your leg before starting compression
- Consider asking your GP about seeing a vascular specialist



This is a guide only and does not replace clinical judgment

References:

O'Meara S, et al. Compression for venous leg ulcers. Cochrane Database Syst Rev 2012; 11:CD000265.

Nelson E, Bell-Syer SEM. Compression for preventing recurrence of venous ulcers. Cochrane Database Syst Rev 2014; 9:CD002303.

AWMA and NZWCS. Australian and New Zealand Clinical Practice Guidelines for Prevention and Management of Venous Leg Ulcers. Barton, ACT: Cambridge Publishing; 2011. <https://www.woundsaustralia.com.au/>

Wounds UK. Best Practice Statement: Addressing complexities in the management of venous leg ulcers. London: Wounds UK; 2019. <https://www.wounds-uk.com/>



60 Musk Ave
Kelvin Grove Qld 4059
Brisbane, Australia

Phone: + 61 7 3138 6000
Email: ihbi@qut.edu.au
Email (Wound Healing): woundresearch@qut.edu.au

CRICOS No. 00213J

www.qut.edu.au/ihbi

This project was funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing under the Encouraging Better Practice in Aged Care (EBPAC) program.

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 by damaged veins.
- Veins return 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 to lower limbs
- Being overweight
- Sitting or standing for long periods

Compression stockings/socks

- Compression stockings or socks should be measured and fitted by a health professional
- Stockings/socks usually may be taken off at night but reapply first thing in the morning
- Stockings/socks should feel firm but not tight
- There is a wide range of equipment available to help put on and take off stockings
- Gently hand wash stockings/socks with mild detergent, squeeze moisture out in a towel and dry in the shade
- Remove compression stockings/socks immediately if toes become purple or blue, if swelling occurs above or below the stockings, or you develop pain or pins and needles. Seek advice from your health professional.



How to prevent venous leg ulcers

✓ Do

- Wear compression stockings/socks for life to reduce the risk of new leg ulcers
- Replace your compression stockings/socks every six months
- Remove all wrinkles from stockings/socks. 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
- Ask for an assessment from a vascular surgeon

✗ 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