

A Guide To Arterial Ulcer Care



About Arterial Ulcers

An arterial ulcer is a round-shaped wound caused by impaired circulation and often seen on the legs or feet. You may experience pain to the legs after exercising or at night when your legs are elevated. Your feet may seem cold or cool to the touch. The skin on your legs may be shiny and dry, without hair present. Your nails may be thick. Your legs may be pale on elevation and ruddy or dusky in color when down. The ulcer will be round in shape with even margins or edges. There may be an absence or decrease of the pulses in your legs.



What to Do

- Stop or cut down on smoking.
- If you are a diabetic, maintain blood sugar control.
- Make sure you receive adequate nutrition.
- Avoid shoes that rub on the area of the ulcer.
- Avoid sitting for long periods of time.
- Avoid crossing the legs.
- Avoid clothing that fits tightly around the legs.
- Notify your doctor if an ulcer develops.
- Perform wound care as your doctor prescribes.



- Notify your doctor if the site increases in redness, drainage, swelling or warmth, or if you develop a temperature over 101 degrees F.
- Consider vascular surgery if your physician thinks it is necessary.



Any wound that has not started to heal in two weeks or completely healed in six weeks may benefit from a specialized wound care center. Ask your regular physician if a referral to a center for wound care might be the right option for you.