

## How to Care For Your Healed Leg Ulcer

Once your leg ulcer is healed you will be followed up at the Leg Ulcer Clinic or by the Community Nursing Team every 6 months. When a venous leg ulcer has healed, there is a 1 in 4 chance of it coming back in the next two years.

The best way to stop your leg ulcer coming back is to:

- Wear compression stockings from the time you get up in the morning until going to bed at night.

The Community Nursing Team will be able to advise you and measure your leg(s) to ensure the compression stockings are the correct fit. There are a range of accessories to help you put these on and off if you need them. Ask your Community Nurse or GP for further information.

### Benefits of following advice on how to care for your leg

- Wearing your compression stockings is known to improve the chance of your leg ulcer staying healed
- By keeping active you are improving your blood flow
- Rest lying flat when possible, with your feet raised to improve your blood flow
- When sitting keep your legs raised to improve your blood flow
- Avoid standing still for long periods as this helps to improve your blood flow.

### Risk of not caring for your leg

- There is a 1 in 4 chance that the leg ulcer may re occur.

### Tips to help care for your leg

- Try to keep a normal sleeping pattern in bed rather than a chair to improve blood flow
- Use creams or emollients to help keep the skin supple and soft
- Avoid using perfumed soaps when showering and bathing
- Always dry your legs carefully
- Try to avoid bumps and knocks to your affected leg
- Examine legs regularly for broken skin, blisters, swelling and redness.

### Elevate your legs on a regular basis

This is one of the most important aspects of the treatment of your venous leg ulcer. Elevating your legs to above the level of your heart encourages the blood to return to the heart and reduces backflow in the veins. This greatly enhances the healing process.

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### **Exercise regularly**

The action of walking causes the calf muscle to squeeze the veins and pump blood back towards the heart. Without this pumping action, all the blood will continue to collect in your legs, due to gravity. Try to avoid standing for long periods of time, for example – ironing, cooking and washing up. If you do find yourself in a situation where you need to stand, try walking briskly on the spot or lifting your heels as this will help to keep the blood circulating.

### **Enjoy a well balance diet**

It is important for general health to eat a well balanced diet. This becomes more important when you are trying to heal your venous leg ulcer. Try to eat a diet which is high in protein, vitamins and minerals as these things help your body to heal.

### **Footwear**

Your footwear needs to be well fitting, safe and comfortable. Socks, if worn need to be well fitted and not tight. Lace ups or trainers that can stretch easily and are often better than slip on shoes. Please bring your chosen footwear if you are reassessed at leg ulcer clinic.

### **When to seek advice**

You should always contact your GP or Community Nursing team if you think your leg is getting worse or the leg ulcer is coming back.