



6) Do not obstruct your veins

Avoid crossing your legs when sitting down and do not wear anything tight around your legs as this will obstruct your veins.

7) Skin Care

Whilst you are wearing compression therapy it is important to look after your skin by regular washing and application of emollient to prevent further areas of dryness and ulceration. Ask your practitioner for a leaflet about skin care for more details.

8) Medication

You may have been prescribed medication to reduce the swelling in your ankles or to help you manage your pain. It is important to take these as prescribed, however if you have any questions about your medicines please discuss this with your health care professional.

9) Living your life

Whilst you might think that having a leg ulcer will affect the things you enjoy doing please try and discuss your worries with your health care professional. It is important to address any concerns you have along the way to ensure you receive the treatment and advice you require.

10) Referral

Your health professional will undertake a full assessment to determine the right treatment for you. A referral to a specialist may be necessary for some people for further advice.

Name of Practitioner/Team undertaking your care:

Contact Number:

Calls via text relay are welcome

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This leaflet can also be made available upon request in Braille, audio cassette, large print or in other languages.

Chinese

此份單張備有中文譯本，請垂詢索取。

Kurdish Sorani

رەبەتسەد شەدروک ینامزەبە هیوارکوالب مەئ تئەرن اوتەد
ی راکاواد رەسەل تئەربکب

Lithuanian

Paprašius, šį lankstinuką galima gauti ir lietuvių kalba.

Polish

Niniejsza ulotka może być na życzenie dostępna w języku polskim.

Portuguese

Este folheto também pode estar disponível, sob pedido, em português.

Russian

Эту брошюру можно также получить по желанию на Русском языке.

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"Putting you first is at the heart of everything we do."

What are veins?

Veins carry the blood back towards your heart. To do this veins rely mainly on the movement of your legs. When the muscles move they squeeze the veins and push the blood upwards. Small valves inside the veins stop the blood flowing back down the veins.

What can be the cause of damage to the veins?

Different things may affect the ability of the veins to move the blood in the right direction including:

- Damaged valves (caused by a thrombosis, commonly referred to as a DVT)
- Pregnancy
- Prolonged periods of standing causing increased pressure in the veins.
- Being overweight.

What happens when the veins do not work properly?

When blood is not able to flow properly the blood flows backwards. This leads to congestion in the veins which will swell and over time cause your ankles to swell. Eventually you may see dark patches on your skin and your legs may become red and itchy. Over time your skin can become delicate and can be easily damaged.

What is a venous leg ulcer?

A venous leg ulcer is a sore or wound on your skin normally below your knee or on your foot that fails to heal even after several weeks. This may be as a result of a minor scratch but will be difficult to heal as a result of the congestion in the veins.

What is the treatment?

Compression therapy is the term given to hosiery and bandaging that assists the blood in your veins being pushed back up to your heart. This should always be prescribed by a nurse or doctor who will discuss treatment choices and make sure it is safe for you to wear.

How can I help my ulcer to heal?

1) Compression therapy

Research has shown that wearing compression therapy is more effective at healing ulcers than dressings alone. If you have a venous leg ulcer and your nurse has assessed you as needing compression therapy it is important that you wear these at all times. Your leg will be bandaged from the base of your toes to just below your knee. If the compression therapy causes you pain and discomfort contact the person providing your treatment as soon as possible.

2) Put your feet up

You should avoid sitting with your legs down

or standing for long periods as this puts pressure on your veins. When sitting you should elevate your legs so they are higher than your hips. If you have stiffness in your hips you might be more comfortable lying on your bed with a couple of pillows under your ankles.

3) Exercise

As well as resting it is important to take as much gentle exercise as you can. Walking is a good form of exercise which helps to improve the return of blood to the heart. If you are sitting down for long periods leg exercises can also be useful. Ask your health care professional to explain about different types of exercises that will help.

4) Eat a healthy diet

A healthy diet containing protein, vitamins and minerals is important for wound healing. These are found in a varied diet of meat, fish, eggs and cheese as well as fruit and vegetables. Ask your practitioner for more advice. It is important to not be overweight as this puts an extra pressure on the veins in your legs.

5) Drink plenty of fluids

It is important to drink plenty of fluid during the day (unless you have been told not to by the doctor). This helps the ulcer to heal and helps to keep your skin healthy. Water is the preferred drink but you can have other drinks, limiting caffeine drinks and those high in sugar.