

UNDERSTANDING LEG ULCERS

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WHAT IS A LEG ULCER?

Wounds on the lower limb are caused by a combination of factors, such as venous insufficiency, peripheral arterial disease, dysfunctional lymphatic system. Other causes are related to oncology disease, infection, autoimmune disorders, diabetes as examples.



HOW TO PREVENT?

- Be attentive to signs and symptoms of the above health conditions and seek healthcare advice when they present , so that a diagnosis is not delayed.
- Different preventative measures can be utilised, for example for venous insufficiency the use of compression therapy; for arterial compromise you can try to reduce the risk factors that lead to the compromise. If not possible, the use of medication/ surgical treatment can be necessary.
- There has to be an understanding that controlling all the risk factors will be beneficial for the prevention and management of leg ulcers, as any conditions that affect circulation, tissue oxygenation and cell nutrient provision will impact these wounds.

HOW TO MANAGE?

- Venous Leg Ulcers - caused mainly by venous insufficiency - compression therapy is the “golden standard”, but skin care is also very important. Changes in lifestyle are also key to manage these ulcers.
- Arterial Leg Ulcers - caused mainly by arterial disease - surgical treatment, accompanied by a change in lifestyle are key to manage these ulcers.
- Mixed Leg Ulcers - when the patient has both venous and arterial impairment - an holistic assessment will dictate the best approach and strategies to support wound healing.



A multidisciplinary team approach will lead to better outcomes as well as involving a Specialist Wound Care Nurse.

The patients must be involved in the care plan, to ensure their needs are being met.