

My ulcer is healed. Now what?

- ✓ Continue to eat a well-balanced diet and drink enough fluid.

Unless you have been told by your doctor to follow a special diet or limit your fluids:

Every day...

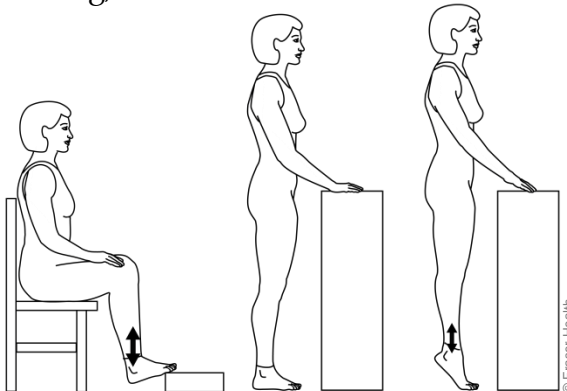
Drink 8 – 10 glasses of water/liquid*

Eat _____ grams of protein

Eat _____ calories

*alcoholic drinks not counted

- ✓ Clean your legs every day with unscented soap and water.
- ✓ Put your feet and legs up whenever you have time.
- ✓ Try not to bump into furniture, or anything sharp or hard.
- ✓ If you smoke, try to quit. The chemicals in cigarettes can slow healing.
- ✓ Exercise every day to help pump blood back up to your heart. Examples: walking, ankle-foot exercise



Compression for Life

You need to wear compression stockings every day for the rest of your life. This will help keep the ulcer from coming back.

- ✓ Put them on first thing every morning.
- ✓ Remove them at bedtime.
- ✓ Follow the instructions on the label for how to wash and dry them.
- ✓ Replace the stockings every 3 to 6 months (they wear out).

When to get help

Contact your doctor or nurse practitioner if you have any of the following:

- red, hot, and swollen leg(s)
- painful leg(s)
- weepy leg(s) – skin oozing drops of fluid
- ulcer that has not healed and draining yellowish or cloudy fluid

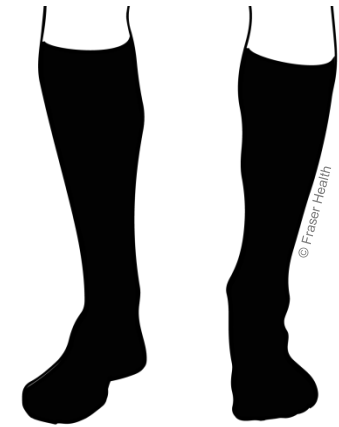
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This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

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To order: patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca



Lower Leg Ulcers Compression for Life



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What is a Lower Leg Ulcer?

A lower leg ulcer is a long-lasting sore anywhere on your leg below your knees.



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The most common kind of leg ulcer is a venous leg ulcer. Venous ulcers happen when there is poor blood flow in the legs. Blood flow backs up and the resulting pressure damages the tiny veins. Any break in your skin or minor injury can become an ulcer. Poor blood flow delays healing.

Who is more likely to get a Lower Leg Ulcer?

You are more likely to get a lower leg ulcer if you have greater pressure on your leg veins.

Some conditions that increase the pressure on leg veins:

- being overweight
- multiple pregnancies
- weak calf muscles from lack of exercise
- deep vein thrombosis (DVT) where small blood clots block blood flow
- varicose veins or family history of them
- increasing age where activity levels decrease

Venous ulcers are more common in women, especially aged 50 and older.

Lower Leg Ulcers – Compression for Life

How can I help the ulcer heal?

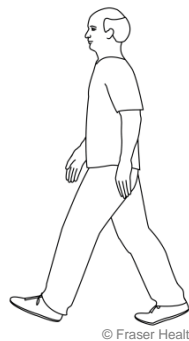
Work with your doctor, wound specialist, and other health professionals to make a plan to heal your ulcer. You might be sent for some tests to find out what is causing the poor circulation in your legs.

To help your ulcer heal:

- Change the ulcer dressings as often as directed.
- Get up and move around often.
- Take short walks 2 to 3 times a day.
- Do leg and ankle exercises often.
- Wear your compression bandage or compression stockings every day.
- When resting, sit or lie with your feet and legs above the level of your heart.
- Avoid standing or sitting for long periods such as on planes, on car trips, or at work.

Did you know that calf muscles help pump blood back towards the heart?

You help blood flow and healing by getting your calf muscles moving.



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Why compression bandages or compression stockings?

Elastic or compression stockings and bandages gently squeeze your legs, helping to move blood up your legs. They can prevent swelling and blood clots.



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Compression bandages and compression stockings look different and are put on differently.

- **Compression bandages** have multiple layers. The bandage allows the pressure to be adjusted as it is wrapped up the leg. Some are changed daily and others can stay on for up to a week. These bandages are worn when leg wounds are present.
- **Compression stockings** look like regular socks and give a constant pressure. Usually, these are worn when the legs are free of wounds.

Will the ulcer heal?

Most venous ulcers improve with treatment. It will take a few months.

Larger or older ulcers might need extra help to heal. Your healthcare provider might suggest medications or surgery.

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