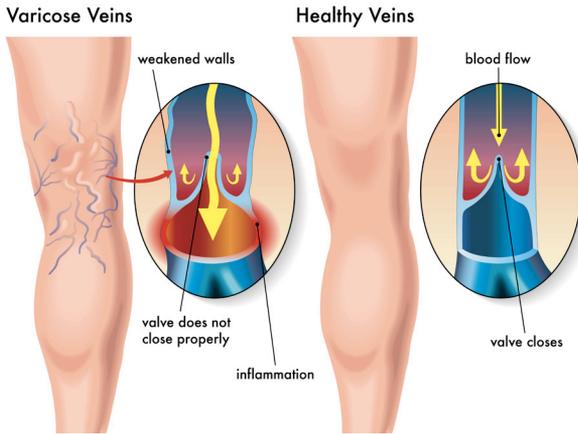


Managing Your Venous Disease



In healthy legs, blood flows down to the legs and feet through the arteries and back up to the heart through the veins. One-way valves in the veins keep the blood from flowing backwards.



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What is Venous Disease?

In venous disease, the valves are weakened or damaged. This causes the blood to pool in the veins in the feet and legs which causes swelling, skin changes, and wounds or ulcers. Venous disease is a chronic condition that requires lifelong management.

See the links for additional information:

www.healthlinkbc.ca

www.selfmanagementbc.ca/SelfManagement

What are some risk factors?

- Obesity
- History of blood clots
- Previous injury or surgery to hip or leg
- Sitting or standing for long periods of time
- Pregnancy

How can I tell if I have venous disease?

You may see:

- leg swelling (edema)
- dry flakey skin on the lower leg(s)
- darkening skin color on your lower leg(s)
- varicose veins
- a wound or ulcer that is slow to heal



Varicose veins



Leg Swelling
(edema)

You may feel:

- heavy, aching legs and feet that increase as the day goes on
- your legs are wet, or weep fluid
- tightness around the ankle and feet
- your footwear may not fit

What can I do to manage my venous disease?

Wear your prescribed compression stockings/garments **every day** whenever you are out of bed. This prevents swelling to your legs and improves blood flow.

Other ways to improve blood flow and reduce swelling:

- Elevate legs above the level of the heart 2–3 times per day for at least 30 minutes.
- Maintain healthy a body weight.
- Walk regularly and/or do leg exercises.
- Elevate the foot of the bed on 5 to 10cm (2 to 4 inches) blocks or bed risers. Discuss with your healthcare provider.
- Avoid crossing legs and ankles.
- Avoid sitting or standing for long periods of time.
- Wear loose comfortable clothing.
- Take your medication as prescribed.
- Have your footwear assessed for correct fit.
- Avoid smoking - consult your doctor or nurse practitioner. Call Quitnow 1-877-455-2233 for more information. See the link for additional information: www.quitnow.ca



Elevating Legs/Feet

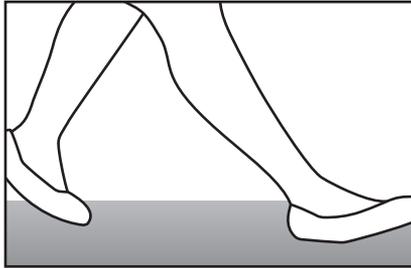
How do I care for the skin on my legs and feet?

- Gently wash legs and feet with an unscented soap, rinse well, and pat dry. Moisturize your legs and feet with an unscented lotion.
- Avoid excess heat and sun as this dries your skin.

Leg exercises you can do

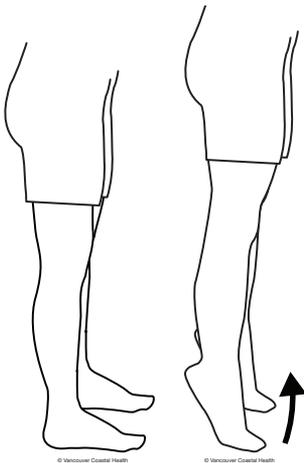
Choose the exercises that work best for you:

Walking helps to move the blood up the legs and back to the heart.

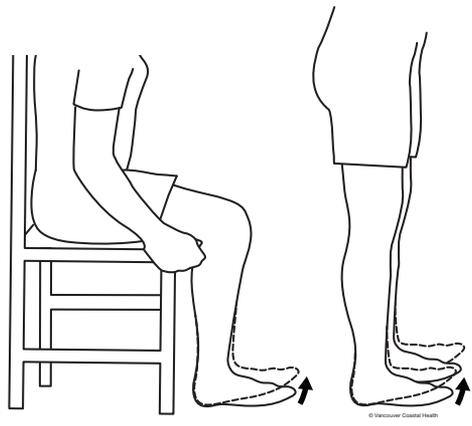


While standing and holding onto a counter or sitting:

1. Raise your heels off the floor, count to 5 and slowly lower them to the floor. Do this 3 times.
2. Shift the weight onto your heels and try to lift your toes off the floor. Do this 5 to 10 times.
3. Do these twice a day.



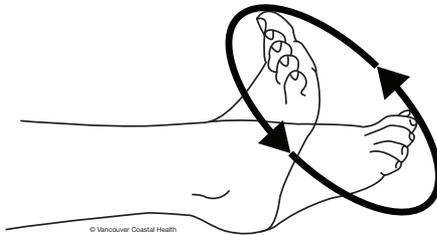
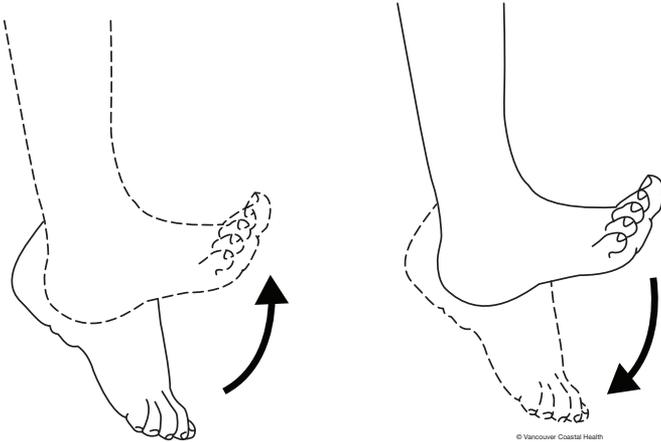
Heel Raises



Toe Raises

While sitting or lying:

1. Flex the foot up and down 10 times.
2. Circle the foot 10 times to the left and 10 times to the right.
3. Do these exercises twice a day.



Ankle Rotation

Developed by the B.C Provincial Nursing Skin and Wound Committee.

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www.fraserhealth.ca

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

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To order: patienteduc@fraserhealth.ca