

Care of your skin

Leg Ulcer Management Team Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

This leaflet is for people who may be at risk of developing skin problems on their legs. It gives information on how you can care for your skin to reduce the risk of this happening.

You may have previously had an ulcer and been given other leaflets about this. If not, please ask your healthcare professional for these.

What is the role of skin?

Your skin provides many functions including temperature regulation and protection. Therefore, it is important to maintain your skin in a healthy condition.

What are the benefits of good skin care?

Good skin care will help to:

- reduce the risk of infection
- maintain a healthy skin condition

What problems should I look out for?

Look out for the following problems and report them to your nurse or healthcare professional, as soon as you can:

Colour – unusual changes in the colour of your skin.

Scratches – if you knock or catch your leg on anything and cause skin damage.

Blisters – from wearing uncomfortable or ill-fitting shoes.

Temperature – if your skin feels unusually hot or cold.

Moist skin – if your leg is swollen, water may leak through the skin and make your skin moist.

Dry and flaky skin – which is not improved by using a moisturiser.

Also, make sure you cut your nails so they do not have any sharp edges. If necessary, see a podiatrist (chiropracist) to do this.

What else can I do to help?

Pay particular attention to washing your feet and legs. Avoid perfumed soaps and dry your skin very carefully, paying particular attention to skin folds and between your toes.

If your skin is dry and flaky, make sure you use a moisturiser regularly. Bedtime is a good time to do this if you take off your compression stockings at night. If you have not been prescribed or recommended a suitable one, please ask.

Always wear footwear and avoid walking barefoot.

Avoid insect bites by using a good repellent. Treat any insect bites quickly and ask for advice.

Remember to ask for advice from your nurse or healthcare professional quickly if:

- you have any cuts, grazes, blisters and bruises.
- your leg becomes unusually hot or more swollen. In this case, do not try to put on your compression stockings. Wait until you have asked for advice.
- you want to shave your legs.

What may contribute to dry skin?

Dehydration – try and make sure you drink at least one litre of water a day, unless you have been told differently by your healthcare professional.

Smoking – avoid smoking if possible. If you would like help with stopping smoking, please contact a member of the Hospital Stop Smoking Team on 01384 456111 ext. 2783.

Exposing your skin to sunlight

Make sure you protect your legs from the sun. If you take off your compression stockings in the sun, always use a good sun block.

Can I find out more?

You can find out more about leg ulcers from the following website:

NHS Choices

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Leg-ulcer-venous/Pages/diagnosis.aspx>

Leg Ulcer Management Team contact details

01384 321425 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Leg Ulcer Management Team
Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre
Venture Way
Brierley Hill
DY5 1RU

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patient-information-leaflets/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru vă rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

یہ کتابچہ آپ کو بڑے حروف کی لکھائی، سمعی صورت اور دیگر زبانوں میں مہیا کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ برائے مہربانی فون نمبر 08000730510 پر رابطہ کریں۔