Who to contact

Clinic: ___________________________________________

Doctor: ___________________________________________

District Nurse ______________________________________

Leg ulcer clinic _____________________________________

Common questions to ask

• Why have I got my leg ulcer?
• How will it be cared for?
• What can I do to help?
• How long will it take to heal?
• When it gets better how can I help to stop it coming back again?

What is a Doppler?

(Please refer to the Trust patient information leaflet produced by the Specialist Nurse) developed by Jackie Stephen-Haynes and Worcester County Tissue Viability Team.

Things to look out for: signs and symptoms

There are some signs and symptoms which indicate that a leg ulcer may develop.

• Your ankles may swell up and you may have some pain in your leg
• You may also experience itchy skin and brown patches may develop.
• People with diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis and some rarer conditions, are also at risk of leg ulcers.

Amongst those at risk, ulcers are more likely to develop if the person has had varicose veins or a thrombosis, has had a family member with venous disease, has high blood pressure or swelling in the legs.

A Patient and Carer Information Leaflet

Your Guide to Venous Leg Ulcers

www.hacw.nhs.uk
Introduction

Leg ulcers can occur at any age. At least 1% of the population over 65 years have a leg ulcer. 70% of these are venous leg ulcers.

What causes a Venous Leg ulcer?

In a normal leg the veins have the difficult job of transporting blood from the legs and up towards the heart. This is done by;

The Calf Muscle pump is the muscle used for walking and exercise which contracts and relaxes which helps to force the blood back towards the heart and then one way valves inside the veins stop the blood flowing back down the leg.

Ulcers can happen spontaneously or as a result of injury to the leg. Valves can be damaged following deep vein thrombosis, pregnancy, standing or carrying too much weight.

What is a Venous Leg Ulcer?

This is a wound to the lower leg that can be slow to heal after 6 weeks. They can have the appearance of craters or holes and vary in colour and size and can be painful.

How will your Leg ulcer be treated?

The treatment aim is to help blood to flow towards the heart again.

To do this the damaged valve and calf muscle needs support and this is done by wearing support bandages which are called compression or multi-component bandages.

The bandages help to prevent the backflow of blood and also help to reduce the swelling, pain, itchy skin and help to heal the ulcer.

What to do

• Walk and exercise regularly
• Wear sensible footwear
• Elevate your legs when you are resting and sleep in your bed
• Keep all appointments with your nurse or doctor
• Look after your skin
• Try to lose weight if you are overweight
• Try to reduce or stop smoking
• Do not interfere with your bandages
• Do not stand still in one position for long periods
• Do not scratch as this can break the skin and lead to an infection.

and eat a healthy balanced diet