

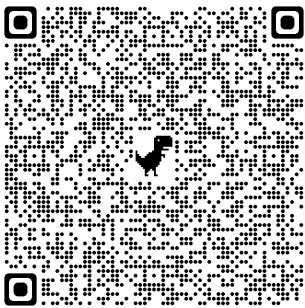
Call your health care provider if you have any of the following:

- swelling in legs, feet, or ankles
- skin around your wound is red or swollen
- ulcer has a foul smell or is draining pus
- increased drainage from your wound
- increased pain

For more information on Venous Leg Ulcers:

Wounds Canada: DIY Series

- [Wound Prevention and Treatment: Do it Yourself \(DIY\) or Call in a Pro? Venous Leg Ulcer](#)



Venous leg ulcers (VLU) or wounds start when the veins in the legs are not working well. Veins have valves, and when damaged, blood pools in the legs causing swelling. This can lead to an ulcer or open sore on the leg or foot that does not heal.

Damage to the valves in veins cannot be repaired, so you are always at risk for leg ulcers.

The choice of treatment and how quickly the ulcer heals will depend on your individual situation. An assessment and testing will be done by a health care provider to determine if compression is appropriate and wound care will be started.

Any swelling in the leg needs to be reduced so the ulcer can heal.

When swelling has reduced and/or the ulcer has healed, compression garments or medical grade [compression stockings](#) will be measured and fitted by a **certified professional**.

How to Prevent Injury to Your Legs and Reduce Swelling

- Take frequent walks for 10 to 15 minutes to help the calf muscles push blood back through the veins.
- Exercise your legs by flexing and pointing your toes and moving your ankles around in a circle a few times a day.
- Wear your compression garments or medical grade stockings daily.
- Elevate your feet at or above your heart level at least 3 times a day.
- Keep a [healthy body weight](#). Being overweight can put extra pressure on your leg veins.
- [High-Protein Foods for Wound Healing](#) may be recommended
- Look at your skin on your legs and feet every day. Use a non-perfumed moisturizer once or twice a day on dry areas.
- Protect your legs and feet from injury. If you bump or scratch your leg, watch for pain, redness, or burning and see your health care provider.
- Avoid sitting with your legs crossed. This reduces blood flow.
- Avoid sitting or standing for long periods of time. Take frequent breaks and move around.
- Wear [appropriate footwear](#).
- Do not smoke. Smoking lowers blood oxygen levels and slows healing. Available resources to [quit smoking](#).