

A Guide for Patients and Families

Care of Patients with Arterial Ulcer

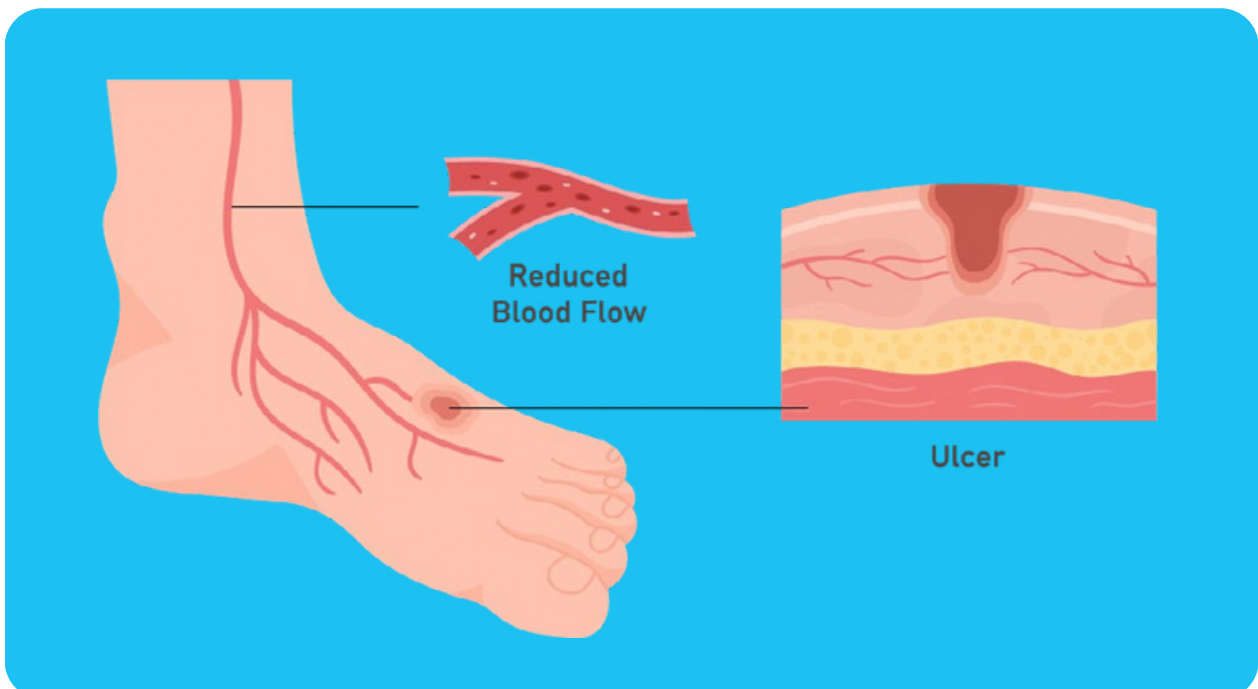


What is Arterial Ulcer ?



Arterial ulcer (wound) is a chronic wound that can occur when there is poor blood flow in your legs. The arteries are responsible for carrying nutrient- and oxygen-rich blood to the various tissues in the body.

Ischaemia, which refers generally to a restriction in the blood supply, can lead to arterial ulcers when it stems from a narrowing of the artery or damage to the small blood vessels in the extremities. The reduced blood flow then in turn leads to tissue necrosis and/or ulceration. Most ischemic ulcers occur on the feet and legs. These types of wounds can be slow to heal.



Arterial vs Venous Leg Ulcers

Venous are not ischaemic ulcer. Venous ulcers occur specifically due to problem with veins, while arterial ulcers occur due to problems with arteries.

Arterial Ulcers



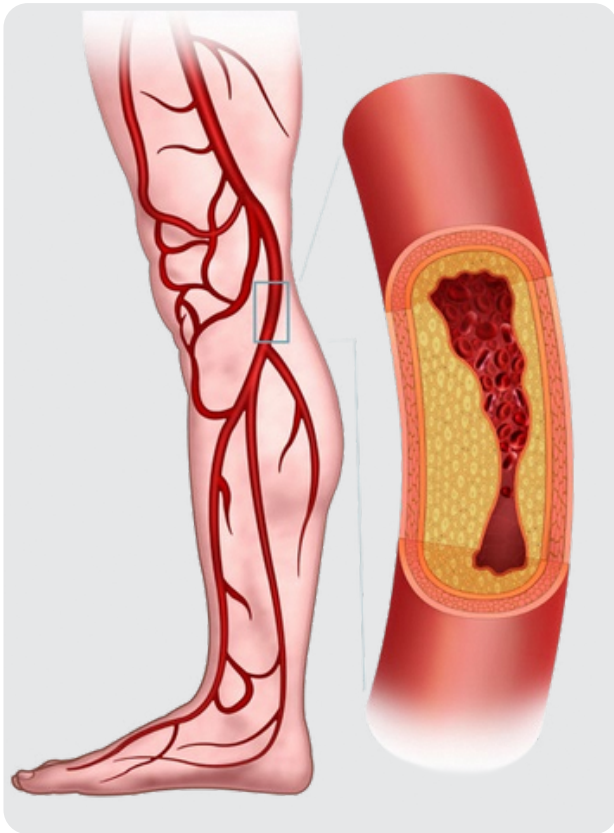
- Toes, feet and shin
- Ulcer is deep and pale
- Skin is shiny, hairless, pallor on elevation, cool temperature
- Mild or absent edema
- Intermittent, severe, resting pain
- Decreased or absent pulses

Venous Ulcers



- Usually around ankle
- Ulcer is superficial, pink beefy red with irregular edges
- Skin leathery, brown and pink discolouration, stasis dermatitis present
- Significant edema
- Aching, mild pain
- Pulses usually normal

Most Common Causes of Arterial Ulcers



- Diabetes mellitus
- Renal failure
- High blood pressure
- Vasculitis
(inflammatory damage of blood vessels)
- Smoking
- Trauma
- Increased age
- Arteriosclerosis
(hardening of the arteries)
- Atherosclerosis
(thickening of the arteries, due to the build-up of fatty materials)

Signs and Symptoms



- Deep, open wounds on the legs, ankles, or feet
- Cold to touch
- Absent or diminished pulse
- Delayed capillary return
- Pain and discomfort at rest

Diagnosis and Treatment

The primary goal of the treatment of arterial ulcers is to increase circulation to the area, if possible either surgically or medically.

Surgical Option



Surgical options include revascularization to restore normal blood flow, as well as amputation and rehabilitation for patients who are not suitable for revascularization.

Non-Surgical Option



Addressing contributing factors can help slow or halt the progression of the underlying ischemia.

Additionally, assessing and minimising the risk of trauma, along with ensuring appropriate footwear, can be beneficial.

Care and Management



WOUND CARE

Keep wound clean and dry at all times.
Dress the wound according to healthcare providers instruction.



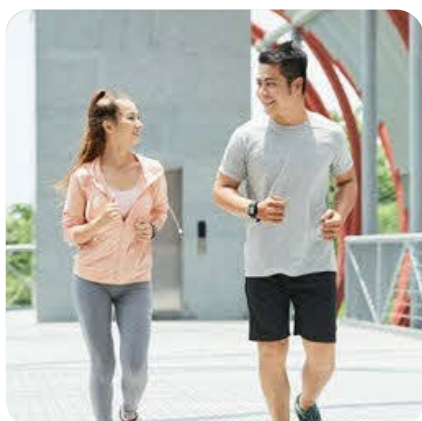
SHOES

Wear shoes that fit properly and
DO NOT rub or put pressure on your feet.



MEDICATION

- Take your chronic medication as prescribed to avoid complication.
- Take pain killer as prescribed.



LIFESTYLE CHANGES

- Quit smoking
- Maintain a well-balanced diet
- Exercise regularly
- Lose weight if you are overweight
- Follow your doctors advise to manage chronic diseases, such as high blood pressure and diabetes



REGULAR APPOINTMENTS

Attend regular follow-up appointments to monitor the healing process and adjust appropriate treatment plan as necessary.

Complications (if any)

If left untreated, arterial ulcers can result in serious complications, including infection, tissue necrosis, and in severe cases, amputation of the affected limbs.

Others

You may wish to proceed to your own attending or nearest hospitals for medical attention and advice if there are any signs of infection, such as:

- Bleeding
- Odour
- Redness, increased warmth, or swelling
- Increased pain
- Fever or chills
- More drainage than before
- Drainage is yellowish or cloudy