



Prevention of Venous Leg Ulcers

What is a Venous Leg Ulcer?

A venous leg ulcer (VLU) is a wound caused by poor blood circulation in the legs, as a result of venous disease.¹ This is due to ineffectively functioning veins that cause a buildup of pressure or “pooling” of blood in the veins (Figure 1).^{1,2} The common side effect is edema, or swelling of the legs, that can eventually lead to the development of skin breakdown.^{1,2}

VLU's can become difficult to heal and have a significant impact on your physical, emotional, and social health. Fortunately, they can be prevented once your healthcare provider makes a diagnosis of venous disease. This can include simple lifestyle changes that you can begin now!

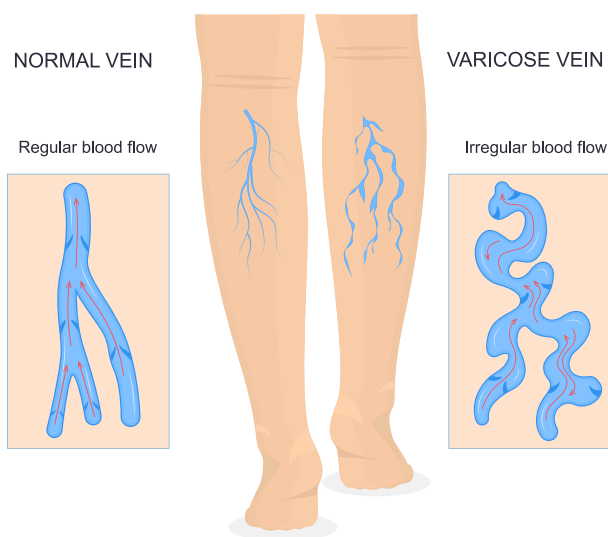


Figure 1: Illustration of regular and irregular blood flow



Figure 2: Varicose Veins

You Need a Diagnosis

Visit a healthcare provider to find out if you are experiencing the following in your legs³:

- ✓ Varicose veins (bulging, rope-like veins)
- ✓ Small veins visible around the ankles
- ✓ Swelling
- ✓ Heavy sensation or aching pain when standing or walking that is relieved with elevation
- ✓ Skin changes:
 - Redness, scaling/dryness, or itching
 - Brown or purple discolouration
 - Thickened or fragile skin

If you have a wound in your leg ask a referral to a wound care specialist at **ADVANCED**. Our team are experts in wound



Contact Us to Learn More!

(807)700-1514

info@advancedwoundcare.ca



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Figure 3: Compression stocks

Reduce Your Risks

- 1) Commit to life-long compression therapy.¹⁻⁴ This can include compression bandages/wraps, garments, or devices.
- 2) Exercise daily to help improve your blood flow by targeting the calf muscles.^{1,2,4} Exercise programs are available specific to venous disease, but simply walking or performing calf muscle pumps are effective.
- 3) Remember to move your legs while travelling long distances, such as walking or stretching.¹
- 4) Avoid sitting or standing for prolonged periods of time.¹⁻⁴
- 5) When resting, elevate your legs above the level of your heart. Do not cross your legs.¹⁻⁴
- 6) Check your legs daily or with compression removal for any new skin changes and skin breakdown.¹
- 7) Focus on proper skin care. Wash your legs with a gentle pH-balanced cleanser. Follow with a non-fragrant moisturizer.¹
- 8) Avoid extremes in temperature and injury to your legs.^{1,4}
- 9) Quit smoking with methods that are best for you. Visit your local health unit for resources!
- 10) Stay hydrated and eat a balanced diet that is high in protein, vitamins, and minerals using Canada's Food Guide:



www.food-guide.canada.ca

References

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3. Alavi, A., Romanelli, M., Mayer, D. (2015). Diagnostics in wound healing. In R.G. Sibbald, E.A. Ayello, J.A. Elliott, editors, *WoundPedia: Wound Care Updates 2015: A Textbook for Healthcare Professionals & the IIWCC*. 5th ed. Vol 2, WoundPedia: Electronic version.
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