

## Leg ulcer clinics

### Hunslet Health Centre

24 Church Street  
Leeds

LS10 2PT

**Tuesday afternoon**

### Park Edge Health Centre

Asket Drive  
Leeds

LS14 1HX

**Thursday mornings**

### Yeadon Health Centre

17 South View Road  
Leeds

LS19 7PS

**Monday mornings**

For appointments at these clinics,  
please telephone

**0113 855 5099**

## Help us get it right

If you have a complaint, concern, comment or compliment please let us know by speaking to a member of our staff. We learn from your feedback and use the information to improve and develop our services.

If you would like to talk to someone outside the service contact the **Patient Experience Team** on **0113 220 8585**, Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm or email [lch.pet@nhs.net](mailto:lch.pet@nhs.net)

**We can make this information available in Braille, large print, audio or other languages on request.**

# Venous Leg Ulcers

**Information for  
patients and carers**



# Venous Leg Ulcers

A leg ulcer is an area of damaged skin below the knee which takes longer than six weeks to heal.

Venous leg ulcers are the most common types of ulcers. They are caused by constant high blood pressure in the leg veins and the pump in the calf muscle not working efficiently.

Blood flows back up the body assisted by the calf muscle and valves in the veins which prevent the blood flowing backwards. If the blood does not circulate properly the pressure in the veins builds up causing swelling, leaking and ultimately damage to the skin.

(Clinical Knowledge Summaries, 2009)

## The signs and symptoms include:

- swollen ankles
- skin discolouration and darkening
- hardened skin
- venous eczema (itchy, irritated skin)

## The risk factors include:

- obesity
- reduced mobility
- deep vein thrombosis (DVT)
- previous leg injury or fracture
- varicose veins
- increased age

## Diagnosis

A venous leg ulcer is diagnosed by a nurse who will perform a physical examination, ask you about your medical history, and undertake a Doppler test if appropriate.

The Doppler test requires you to lay down for 20 minutes while the blood pressure in your arms and ankles are compared to determine whether or not you have any arterial insufficiency.

## Treatment

The nurse will apply a compression bandage which consists of 2-4 bandages. When these are applied, the high pressure is reduced and the calf muscle pump is supported, helping the blood flow properly.

Research shows that this is the most effective treatment for venous leg ulcers.

## Footwear

Compression bandages can be bulky so you may need to buy larger footwear or ask your nurse to prescribe you a temporary shoe.

## Pain

Venous leg ulcers can be very painful. It is important that you take your analgesia regularly. If paracetamol is not effective you may need to visit your GP.

## Preventing ulcers reoccurring

Once your ulcer is healed, you should wear compression (support) stockings as prescribed by your nurse or GP and visit 3 monthly, or as recommended, in order to prevent your leg ulcer returning.

**Remember ulcers are much less likely to reoccur if you wear compression stockings at all times during the day.**