

## What is an arterial ulcer?

Arterial ulcers are located on the feet. In between the toes, outer ankle, tips of toes, and in between toes are common locations. These ulcers can be deep and are hard to heal. Arteries are the channels that carry blood from the heart to your body's tissues. When the arteries in your leg or foot are narrowed or blocked, blood flow is interrupted. This can lead to arterial ulcers. Arterial ulcers are also caused by damage to small blood vessels when you have had diabetes or other blood circulation problems for a long time.

## What are the symptoms and how did you get it?

Arterial ulcers are caused by poor circulation. Your legs or feet may not have much hair, are cold most of the time, and your skin is smooth and shiny. Your skin may have a red or purple appearance and be cool to the touch.



The pain in your leg, foot, or ulcer may get worse when you raise your leg. If you are a smoker quit. Your doctor can help you with smoking cessation education. Other contributors to why arterial ulcers develop include: high blood pressure, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, heart disease, and atherosclerosis (fatty deposits in arteries).



## What can you do to help your wound?

It is very important to follow the directions given to you by your doctor or nurse. Your doctor or nurse may perform tests to look at the blood flow in your legs and feet. It is important to keep your legs and feet warm and protected from injury.

Your doctor may refer you to see a surgeon who will try to improve your circulation with surgery. It is recommended to stop smoking, examine your feet, and legs every day, wear socks without seams, loose fitting shoes, walking, and reduce fat in your diet.

## **When should I call my doctor?**

- Increased pain
- Increased swelling
- Red and warmth surrounding wound and or skin
- Increased drainage
- Smelly drainage after cleansing your wound during dressing changes.

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