



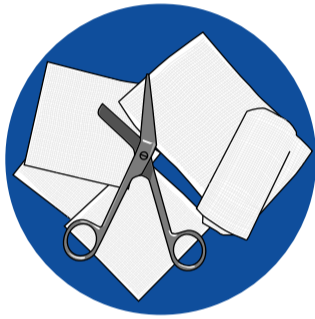
# LEG ULCERS

Leg ulcers are open wounds and they are very common. They can sometimes become infected by bacteria which can result in slower healing. They are more common in older people and those with diabetes or poor circulation.



## What does it feel like?

If an ulcer is infected the skin around it may be **red, hot and swollen** and there may be **pus visible**. People with nerve problems in their legs may not feel pain with an infected ulcer.



## What can I do to feel better?

**Cleaning and dressing** the ulcer is often required. Sometimes infected ulcers are best managed in hospital or by a wound care team. Your doctor or practice nurse may need to see you regularly.



## Will antibiotics help?

If an infection is present, antibiotics may be needed. Your doctor will advise you.



## What can I do to prevent it?

This depends on the cause of your ulcer. Optimising blood glucose levels if you have diabetes is important. Stopping smoking can also help. Compression stockings should only be worn if recommended by your health professional. Your doctor or nurse will give you specific advice.



## Do I need to see a doctor?

Yes. Your doctor will need to assess you to decide whether you need antibiotics. You may also need tests to determine the cause of the ulcer and whether other treatments are required.

This information sheet was developed by the National Centre for Antimicrobial Stewardship and the University of Melbourne. Information sheets on other common infections can be found at <https://www.ncas-australia.org/community-information-sheets>.

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