

# Prevent Your Venous Ulcers From Coming Back

## What can I do to help keep my leg ulcers from coming back?

- Always keep your skin clean and moisturized. It is best to use creams and lotions, such as Sween-24 or Eucerin, that do not contain perfumes, alcohol or unnecessary additives that may lead to sensitivities or rashes. If your skin is very dry and scaly, use a moisturizer that contains urea or lactic acid, such as Lac-hydrin 12% or Attractain. These moisturizers can be purchased at a local pharmacy or online.
- Wear the compression stockings that were prescribed for you. Be sure to put them on first thing in the morning and follow the manufacturer's instructions for care of your stockings. Remember they should be replaced every 6 months.
- Do not wear garters or elastic bands around socks or anything else that interferes with your circulation.
- Avoid sitting with crossed legs.
- Place a foam wedge under your mattress or under the bottom sheet of your bedding so that your legs will be elevated at night with your heels floating.
- Elevate your legs so that your lower legs are higher than your heart for at least 30 minutes in the late morning, afternoon and early evening.
- Avoid standing in one place for long periods of time.
- Walk several times each day. Walking will increase your circulation.
- Try to make healthy choices. Not smoking, eating a balanced, low-salt diet, and maintaining your ideal body weight can all help reduce problems related to your circulation. Smoking actually slows your circulation, too much salt can increase the swelling in your legs, and excess weight can place extra strain on your system. To learn more about taking steps to be as healthy as you can be, check your *Kaiser Permanente Healthwise Handbook* or contact your local Kaiser Permanente Health Education Department or Center. Online at [kp.org/healthylifestyles](http://kp.org/healthylifestyles), you can choose from a variety of smoking cessation, healthy eating, and weight management tools and programs to suit your style and schedule.
- Contact your doctor or other health care professional if you experience an increase in swelling, pain, or if there is any obvious redness or itching in your legs.
- Contact your doctor or other health care professional if you have any injury to your lower legs so that the right treatment can be started.



This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor. If you have questions or need more information about your medication, please speak to your pharmacist. Kaiser Permanente does not endorse any brand names; any similar products may be used.