Find out more

To find out more information, please speak to the nurse in the clinic when you attend your appointment.

Leg ulcer clinics

You can receive help with queries about NCH&C services from Patient Advice and Liaison Service

Telephone: 0800 088 4449
Email: pals@nchc.nhs.uk
(Monday-Friday 9am-5pm)

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What is a leg ulcer?
A leg ulcer is a break in the skin on the lower leg which has been present for the duration of six weeks or more.

There are many causes of leg ulcers, but these can usually be categorised into venous ulcers (caused by inadequate blood return), arterial ulcers (caused by inadequate blood supply) or ulcers with elements of both.

How will my ulcers heal?
The treatment of a leg ulcer is reliant on partnership working. Together you and the nurse in clinic will form an agreement about treatment, which will include self-help strategies. Treatment choices depend upon the cause of the ulcer. Venous and mixed ulcers can usually be treated with a degree of compression therapy to improve the blood supply; either in the form of compression hosiery/socks or bandages.

This is a lifelong treatment. When your ulcers heal self-management of compression hosiery/socks will be required to prevent further ulceration.

There may be a need for onward referrals to the Vascular or Dermatology Department at the hospital in addition to treatment at the Leg Ulcer Clinic. Arterial ulcers cannot be treated in Leg Ulcer Clinic and will require assessment from the Vascular Team based at the hospital. In all cases, promoting a healthy lifestyle will improve healing potential; so a well-balanced, high protein diet, regular activity or exercise and elevating feet about hip height when at rest, will aid healing.

What can I expect from Leg Ulcer Clinic and what is expected of me?
Leg Ulcer Clinic is a specialist service and nurses performing assessments and reviews in these clinics have undertaken an additional university course to qualify them to provide this level of care.

We ask that you consider this clinic in the same regard as any other specialist outpatient clinic. We would expect you to attend the Leg Ulcer Clinic for the initial assessment appointment as you would for Dermatology or Vascular appointments. Clinics run from 8.30am to 4pm Monday to Friday across a number of venues.

Following referral to a Leg Ulcer Clinic, a member of our administration team will attempt to contact you within the next week to arrange an appointment within two weeks. They will call you twice and if they cannot reach you by phone they will send you an appointment letter. There may be a longer wait at your local clinic so you will be offered a variety of venues in the area to ensure you have the opportunity to be seen as soon as possible.

The assessment appointment is a lengthy one (allow up to two hours) and it will involve you lying down for around 30 minutes while we complete a Doppler test. This, alongside your assessment will aid the decision around which treatment options are suitable for you. If you are suitable for treatment in the Leg Ulcer Clinic you will be offered a course of treatment at a variety of locations. Please note that Community Nurses only do home visits for patients who cannot get out of their home and into a vehicle with minimal assistance. Please be aware that we are likely to ask you to use public transport, volunteer drivers, friend or family to assist you accessing these specialist clinics.

After 12 weeks, we will undertake a review to assess the level of improvement and make onward referrals if required.