Lower Leg Wound Guidance





Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

To establish the potential wound type for wounds below the knee to the malleolus (ankle).

Red Legs	Chronic Oedema (Lymphoedema)	Wet legs / Lymphorrhoea	Cellulitis	Haematoma	Skin Tear	Leg Ulcer Venous	Leg Ulcer Mixed	Leg Ulcer Arterial
Definitions								
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Presents as redness, warmth and tenderness of the lower limbs, without signs of infection, in patients with a history of venous disease, chronic oedema and dermatological conditions. (Salmon 2016; Wounds UK 2019).	Includes all forms of swelling, including lymphoedema, that has been present for longer than three months. (Best practice in the community Chronic oedema 2019).	Discharge of lymph fluid through the skin, caused by untreated oedema. It appears as beads of fluid. (Best practice in the community Chronic oedema 2019).	An inflammatory skin condition caused by acute infection of the skin, characterised by a superficial, diffuse, spreading skin infection without underlying collection of pus. Bilateral leg cellulitis is very rare. (Atkins 2016) (NICE 2015).	A bruise or collection of blood in the tissues. They appear as a dark red/black collection of blood standing proud of the skin. (Beldon 2011). (Collins et al, 2002).	A skin tear is a traumatic wound caused by mechanical forces, including the removal of adhesives. Severity may vary by depth (not extending through the subcutaneous layer). (Le Blanc K et al 2018).	A break in the skin that has been present for more than 14 days, in the presence of Venous Disease. (NICE 2020).	A break in the skin that has been present for more than 14 days, in the presence of Venous Disease and Peripheral Arterial Disease. (Harding 2015).	A break in the skin that has been present for more than 14 days, as a result of reduced arterial blood flow, in the presence of Peripheral Arterial Disease. (Moffatt 2001).
Refer to the Guidance for identifying Cellulitis or Red Legs if required.			(NICE 2015).		2018). Refer to the Guidance for identifying Cellulitis or Red Legs if required.	If there is a break in the skin that has been present for more than 14 days, with no diagnosis of Venous Disease or Peripheral Arterial Disease is defined as a Leg Ulcer — Unknown Aetiology		

If the named product on this pathway is not available a temporary second line product is available to use. This can be found within the main text of the Doncaster Wide Wound Care Formulary Document.

Reference: NICE (2020) Leg Ulcer Pathway. Grey, J. et al (2006) Venous and arterial leg ulcer. ABC of wound healing. British Medical Journal. Newton, H. (2011) Leg ulcers: Differences between venous and arterial. Wounds Essential. National Wound Care Strategy Programme (2020) Lower Limb Recommendations for Clinical Care. Developed by: Tissue Viability and Lymphoedema Service and The Skin Integrity Team. Update June 2022 v2. For Review June 2024.