




## Arterial Ulcers

### General Definition

**Arterial Insufficiency Ulcers** are caused by arteriosclerosis which leads to insufficient oxygenation of the skin and underlying tissues. This kills the affected tissues and causes wounds.



-  **Standard Treatment Protocols**
-  **Dressings and Infection Control**
-  **Prevention**

There are several causes for lower extremity ulcers. In order to provide proper treatment for the patient, it is important to determine the exact cause of the wounds involved. Incorrect diagnosis could lead to incorrect treatment which may ultimately harm the patient.

### Dressing Applications:

- ▶ [Treatment Application Guidelines - Arterial Ulcers](#)
- ▶ [Arterial Ulcer Characteristics](#)

**NOTE:** The procedures listed above are guidelines. They are not meant to replace any existing protocols or institutional policies. The dressings used on these pages may not be covered under current Medicare reimbursement guidelines. Contact your local Sales Representative for more information



## ***Arterial Ulcers***

### **Standard Treatment Protocols:**

- Revascularization
- Avoid caffeine
- Avoid cold temperatures
- Avoid constrictive garments
- Topical therapy:
  - Keep wounds clean and protect from external environment
  - Use non-occlusive wound dressings
  - CAUTION: Occlusive dressings are not recommended

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## ***Arterial Ulcers***

### **Dressings & Infection Control**

#### **Infection Control**

Infection is common with arterial ulcers. Aggressive treatment is recommended based on the signs of infection.

#### **Dressings**

The principles of moist wound healing apply to the treatment of lower extremity ulcers. Dressings are used to control exudate and maintain a moist wound healing environment. Exercise caution when using occlusive dressings (such as hydrocolloids).

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## ***Arterial Ulcers***

### **Prevention:**

- Stop smoking
- Maintain or attain ideal body weight
- Control glucose levels
- Avoid crossing of the legs
- Wear well-fitting shoes (leather is best)
- Do not go barefoot
- Keep the feet clean and dry
- Avoid caffeine
- Inspect the feet daily, especially between the toes
- Seek professional care if unable to trim toenails, or if corns/callouses develop
- Control edema
- Ambulate to tolerance
- If in pain during exercise:
  - Limit exercise to tolerance level
  - Avoid cold
  - Consider surgical re-vascularization
- If in pain at night or rest:
  - Dangle feet
  - Refer for vascular studies

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## Arterial Ulcers

### Treatment Application Guidelines - Arterial Ulcers

1. Choose the correct size of Hydrogel Sheet dressing, such as Kendall's AQUAFLO dressing. Cover about a 1" margin of intact skin around the wound.
2. After wound has been cleansed and debrided and you have opened the wound dressing package or packages, reglove.
3. Apply the AQUAFLO dressing to the wound following the delivery system described on the package.
4. Secure the AQUAFLO dressing with a KERLIX Bandage Roll or TENDERFIX Cloth Tape.
5. This dressing should be changed every three to seven days.

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## **Arterial Ulcers**

### **Arterial Ulcer Characteristics**

- Pale base color when the legs are elevated; red base color when the legs are dependent
- Surrounding skin is shiny, taut, thin, dry, hairless
- Deep depth
- Even wound margins
- Minimal exudate
- Variable amounts of edema
- Skin temperature is cold to the touch
- Granulation tissue is rarely present
- Infection if frequent
- Necrosis, eschar, and/or gangrene may be present
- Pain during exercise, at night, or even at rest
- Peripheral pulse diminished or absent
- Capillary refill is delayed
- Located between toes, on toe tips, outer ankle, or where there is trauma and/or friction from walking

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