Stasis Ulcer

Stasis ulcers occur in legs when the circulation is damaged. An ulcer is like a small hole in the skin. It occurs because as we age, the blood supply becomes less because of hardening of the arteries. The stasis ulcer, as the name suggests, is an ulcer that forms because the blood is not returning to the heart well enough. This is mostly due to varicose veins. Varicose veins are veins that have become enlarged and twisted. Valves in the veins help return blood from the leg to the heart. If these valves are damaged, blood flows backwards and backs up (this is the stasis) into the veins in the leg near the skin, causing the veins to become larger because of increased pressure within. People who are on their feet a lot, who are pregnant, or who are overweight are more likely to develop varicose veins. These young people do not get stasis ulcers. However, as they age they will be at greater risk for them. This is one reason for caring for varicose veins at any age.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Stay off your feet as much as possible. Do not stand or sit in one position for long periods of time. Do not sit with your legs crossed. Rest with your legs raised during the day.
- Wear elastic stockings or support hose. Do not wear other tight encircling garments around legs, pelvis, or waist. This causes increased pressure in your veins. If your caregiver has applied compressive medicated wraps, care for them as instructed.
- Walk as much as possible to increase blood flow. If you are taking long rides as in a car or plane, get out or up and walk around every two hours. If not already on aspirin, take a baby aspirin before long trips unless you have medical reasons that prohibit this.
- Raise the foot of your bed at night with 2-inch blocks. Check with your caregiver because this may not be desirable if you have heart failure or breathing problems.
- If you get a cut in the skin over the vein and the vein bleeds, lie down with your leg raised and press on it with a clean cloth until the bleeding stops. Then place a dressing on the cut. See a caregiver if it continues to bleed or needs stitches.
- If your caregiver has given you a follow-up appointment, it is very important to keep that appointment. Not keeping the appointment could result in a chronic or permanent injury, pain, and disability. If there is any problem keeping the appointment, you must call back to this facility for assistance.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION IF:

- The ulcerated area starts to break down.
- You have pain, redness, tenderness, or hard swelling developing in your leg over a vein or near the ulcer.
- You are uncomfortable with leg pain.
- You develop an unexplained temperature.
- You develop chest pain or shortness of breath.

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