PATIENTS COMMUNITY
PRACTICE AND DISTRICT NURSES
LEG CLUB®
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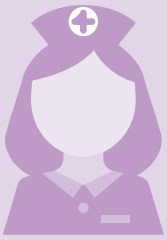
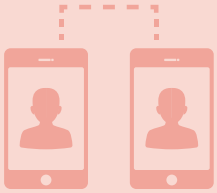
Tips on photographing your wound

Coronavirus has had a huge impact on some Leg Club venues and continues to do so. Our priority is helping and supporting our volunteers and members (patients) both during and after the crisis. Things are not returning to normal any day soon, and perhaps never will completely, but your Leg Club nurses are working extremely hard to adapt to a new way of working with their Club.



The pandemic has seen a rapid escalation in the use of telecommunication technology within our healthcare environments. It has enabled healthcare personnel to virtually visit patients confined to their own homes during periods of social isolation[1].

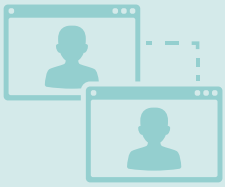
One example since the Coronavirus lockdown in March 2020 has been the introduction by some Leg Club teams of the 'Supported Shared Care' concept, which has been adopted with support from the clinical team and the members' carers and/or family. Many Leg Club volunteers, and clinical teams have organised regular supportive phone calls and some teams produced information leaflets for those experiencing current leg ulcers, new skin-related problems or new wounds.



During consultation and with support from your Leg Club nursing team, you will be encouraged and empowered to participate in the management and care of your legs. This will give you an opportunity to manage any wound-related issues with ongoing support and guidance.

The aim of the Supported Shared Care programme is to prevent any skin tear or new wound developing into an ulcer by ensuring prompt treatment, whilst also promoting person-centred care and improve your quality of life and general wellbeing.

How will my Leg Club nurse monitor my wound?



Many Leg Club members with wound management needs will continue with face-to-face appointments. However, there are also many innovative ways to support shared care when this is not possible. Virtual visits can be used to share practical tips on how to use telehealth in monitoring, assessing and managing your leg ulcer.

Virtual visits will never be a complete substitute for face-to-face visits, but the continued need of patients who are unable to attend clinics or live in remote locations mean they will play a big part in care provision [1].

In order to monitor your wound management progress, it may be helpful if you can provide regular photos of a new wound, any skin-related issues or general concerns you have about your leg ulcer.

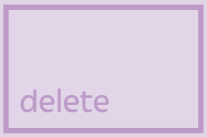
Your nurse will give you either an NHS email address for you to send your photos to or the facility to send these via a secure mobile phone link. This will help the team to assess your wound more thoroughly.

Most photographs will be stored securely, in line with data protection requirements, in your electronic patient record and will be used to assess the condition of the wound and monitor progress at the next appointment. This is the main purpose of taking photographs and provides the most accurate record of progress or deterioration [2].

However, how photographs are obtained is important. Photographs taken for your wound care form part of your patient record and are potentially legal documents. This means that informed consent must be obtained giving your healthcare team permission to only use your photos for the purposes mentioned.

You need to be assured that your personal identity will not be recognisable in any images taken.

When the image has been uploaded and stored securely within your clinical record, your photos will be deleted from the email or automatically deleted if sent via text message.



Tips

Most modern mobile phones and tablets should be capable of taking a good photograph and photos of a wound or leg ulcer will provide an additional visual assessment for your clinical team.

If you are able it can be really useful to take a photograph of your leg wound that you can send to your nurse or HCP before your consultation, so that they can assess the progress of your wound before collaborating with you about the next steps for your care.

It may help to get someone else to take the photograph, particularly if you can't see your wound clearly.

Sometimes it's easier to use a mirror if you have difficulty with focusing on the wound site.

If you take the photo of the wound through the mirror, then the flash should be turned off or it will be too bright and obstruct the image.

Do not get the device too close, most cameras and phones can only focus to about half a meter. If you go closer, it may be blurred.

Your nurse can always zoom in on particular areas of the photograph, if required.

When it comes to capturing visual images, light becomes important. Use a bright area or make sure you put the lights on, and the light falls on the wound.

Ask your nurse to provide you with a paper ruler or use a tape measure placed close to the edges of your wound, as it often helps your nurse to assess the size of your wound.

Try to take the picture from the same angle each time you take a photo.

Visit the Leg Club website **www.legclub.org** public information section for information.

References:

[1] McGuiness.B, (2020) Woundconnect, National newsletter for Wounds Australia.
[2] Hampton.S,Kilroy-Findley.A,(2016). Taking photographs of wounds and data protection. Wounds UK | Vol 12 | No 1 | 2016

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