

 Your ulcer has healed - the next steps

Congratulations, your ulcer has healed. It may have taken some time to get to this stage, so it’s important to follow these guidelines to ensure it remains healed.

The ulcer may appear as if it has closed and it’s no longer weeping. However, the new tissue that has formed is very fragile and vulnerable, so it’s important to be gentle and take it slowly as it may break down again.

Water and moisture cause the skin to swell. This not only affects wound closure and the healing process, but can aid the entry of bacteria and increase the risk of a wound breaking down and becoming infected. It is therefore important to protect your wound from germs and water until it fully heals.

Research tells us that if you have had an ulcer before, this increases the risk of further ulceration, so it’s important we ensure the area is completely healed.

You have had a foot ulcer which has taken some weeks to heal, therefore your risk of re-ulceration is greater. Following the points below will improve the chances that you will not re-ulcerate.

**Week one**

Keep your dressing on and keep the area dry, as you’ve been doing. It helps to treat it as if it is still ulcerated to give the new tissue time to repair and renew.

**Weeks two and three**

Continue to keep the skin dry – avoid getting it wet in the shower / bath. Remove the dressing at night and moisturise the area. In the morning, reapply a new dry dressing – the podiatrist will advise you on this.

**Week four**

Following review by your podiatrist, they may decide that you can now remove the dressing. You should still keep the area clean and dry, so still wetting the area in baths or showers.

**Week five**

If on review at week five your foot is still healed, your podiatrist will now advise you if you can get your foot wet. Some people may require a further two weeks keeping your foot dry.

Avoid soaking the feet – swimming should still be avoided for a while longer.

**How soon will I be able to resume normal activities?**

Continue to rest. Your podiatrist will advise you on slowly returning to your usual activities.

**When to seek help:**

Continue to check your feet daily. If the dressing is still being used, check the area around the dressing.

• Is there any new pain?

• Does the foot feel hotter?

• Has it become redder?

• Is there any swelling?

• Is there any discharge?

• Do you have any flu-like symptoms?

If you notice any of these symptoms, then please contact your GP or call NHS 111 for advice. Then, please call podiatry on the number you have been given.

**In serious or life-threatening emergencies, please dial 999 immediately.**

**Will I have to come back for more appointments?**

Whilst your ulcer was healing, you may have been given a temporary shoe. Your podiatrist will ask you to bring in your footwear so we can review it and ensure it will be appropriate for use in the future. We will continue to review your care with podiatry once your ulcer is completely healed.

Important information: **Individual Advice**

Earliest date to remove dressing during day:

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Earliest date of water exposure:

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Recommended moisturiser:

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