



Why do I need a foot and leg wound care team?

Amputations can often be prevented by getting proper evaluation and care of your wound **EARLY** with a skilled group of doctors/nurses and team members.

- Wounds, ulcers and sores on the feet and legs are a sign that you should get help **NOW**.
- Start by reaching out to your regular doctor **NOW**. Ask for a referral to a wound care team.

Who should be on my wound care team?

- You are the captain of your wound care team!
- Other team members may include many different doctors, nurses and therapists who communicate with each other about your foot. Common team members are Podiatry, Vascular Specialist/Surgery, Cardiology, Wound Care, Dermatology, or other health care professionals dedicated to helping you.



What is my role on the wound care team?

- Take responsibility for healing your wound and follow advice from your team.
- Work with your team and share if there are obstacles to managing your health or their wound care recommendations (especially if you have diabetes).
- Speak up for yourself/your family to get the right team for your care. **Teams that work together have better amputation rates than only one doctor/nurse.**
- Consider a **2nd opinion** if your wound is not healing at least 50 % within a recommended time frame (usually 1 month).
- Ask questions/understand: What caused your wound, what may be causing it not to heal (see below).
- **Know if you are you at high or low risk for amputation**
- **Never be afraid to ask questions if you don't understand.**
- **Follow up with your wound care team regularly.**
- **Check your feet every day for signs of wounds/ulcers.** Tell someone right away if there is a change in your wound.

Team member roles - Toe & Flow Doctors are key!

- **Podiatrist (TOE) who specializes in wound care:** Doctors who treat your toe/foot overall and help relieve pressure so wounds can heal.
- **Vascular Specialist/Surgeon (FLOW) who specialize in the treatment of damaged blood vessels in your legs and feet:** Vascular surgeons treat conditions related to the blood flow in your veins and arteries.
- **Wound Care Specialist:** Health care workers who have extensive knowledge of what causes wounds, why some wounds don't heal well on their own, and how to treat wounds.

What should I do if I can't find a wound care (Toe and Flow) team near me?

Contact your local university hospital or medical center and ask for the wound care or surgery department.



What services can I expect from my wound care team?

- Review your history and risk factors for a slow or non-healing wound.
- Complete foot evaluation (**Toe** =Podiatry): wound, skin, bone, joints, nerves, blood flow and shoes.
- Blood flow evaluation (**Flow**= Vascular Specialist/Surgeon): Many ways to evaluate, often blood pressure cuff measurements on your arms/legs are compared.
- Ability for you to move/walk safely (**Go** = Physical Therapy) when using devices to take weight off (**Off Load**) pressure areas.
- Possible referral to team members who can help support mental health, including living with diabetes and other problems.
- Share your individual level of risk for amputation (**low to high**).

What are some common challenges that I may experience with wound care?

- **Insurance plan coverage:** some treatments may not be covered by insurance.
- It may be **harder to walk** because of modified shoes, casts, or bandages.
- **Feelings of isolation, anxiety or depression** are common. If you are having these feelings, share them with your team immediately.

