

Leg Ulcers and Pressure Sores		
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SKIN AND SOFT TISSUE INFECTIONS

Leg Ulcers and Pressure Sores

A leg ulcer is a break in the skin below the knee which has not healed within 2 weeks.

A pressure sore / ulcer is localised damage to the skin and/or underlying tissue, because of pressure or pressure in combination with shear.

Bacteria will always be present. Do not routinely swab ulcers/ pressure sores .

Swabs for culture are only indicated if there are *new clinical signs of infection* i.e., spreading cellulitis, purulent exudate, systemic illness, pyrexia, malodour or increasing pain.

In the absence of any new clinical signs of infection, as described above, **antibiotics do not improve healing.**

[Management of lower limb inflammation \(Nottingham CityCare IPC and Tissue Viability Teams\)](#)

Organisms that may be present:

- Group A Streptococcus (*Streptococcus pyogenes*)
- *Staphylococcus aureus*
- Group B, C + G Streptococcus
- Anaerobes
- Coliforms – common colonisers
- *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* – common coloniser

Choice of antibiotics when needed for a clinical infection should, where possible, be directed by the sensitivities of the organism.

Topical antiseptics such as silver sulphadiazine or povidone iodine for *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* or topical metronidazole for anaerobes may be necessary to control exudate and odour. Refer to the [Wound Care Formulary](#) for advice on using topical wound cleansers and antimicrobial products in chronically colonised wounds.

Refer to Tissue Viability team if there are difficulties in managing a wound with persistent infection/colonisation or if antimicrobial products are not being effective after 2 weeks of use.

Antibiotic ¹	Dosage	Duration
First line choice:		
Flucloxacillin	Adult: 500mg-1g four times a day	7 days
<i>In penicillin allergy:</i>		
Clarithromycin ³ OR Erythromycin ^{2,3} (Preferred in pregnancy)	Adult: 500mg twice a day Adult: 500mg four times a day	7 days 7 days
<i>If macrolide not suitable:</i>		
Doxycycline ⁴	Adult: 200mg first day then 100mg once daily.	7 days
¹ See BNF and BNFC for appropriate use and dosing in specific populations, e.g., hepatic, or renal impairment, pregnancy, and breastfeeding. ² Erythromycin is preferred in women who are pregnant. ³ Withhold statins whilst on clarithromycin/erythromycin course. ⁴ Doxycycline is not suitable for pregnant women		

Version Control – Leg Ulcers and Pressure Sores			
Version	Author(s)	Date	Changes
V2.1	Nichola Butcher, MO Interface Pharmacist	18/05/23	Standard template and treatment table added. Definition added. Added CityCare lower limb inflammation guide