

Leaflets in the range

- 1 Venous disorders of the lower leg explained.
- 2 What is a venous leg ulcer?
- 3 Arterial disorders of the lower leg explained.
- 4 What is a Doppler Ultrasound Scan?
- 5 I am going for a Duplex Scan.
- 6 Understanding compression bandaging.
- 7 Understanding compression hosiery.
- 8 Exercises to improve ulcer healing and help prevent recurrence.
- 9 How can I help my venous leg ulcer to heal?
- 10 Care of your skin.

Contact details of the person prescribing/ providing your care

This leaflet is provided to offer advice but does not intend or claim to cover all eventualities. If you are concerned you must seek professional help from your nurse or doctor or the person providing your care.

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Leg Ulcer Forum

Patient Information Leaflet Number 4

What is a Doppler Ultrasound Scan?

www.legulcerforum.org

What is a Doppler Ultrasound Scan?

(Usually just called a Doppler)

The Doppler is a small machine which is used to measure the blood supply in your legs. The Doppler test is usually done before compression bandages or hosiery are prescribed for your legs. It is a safety check and is similar to having your blood pressure taken. The blood pressure is measured in your arms and ankles. The two readings will be compared. It will not be painful but you may feel the cuff becoming tight around your arm and ankles as the reading is measured. If you are concerned about this please discuss it with your nurse.

Where will the Doppler test be done?

It may be done in a health clinic, doctor's surgery, at home or in a hospital clinic. The test is usually carried out by a nurse. Sometimes it may be done by a doctor or at the hospital by a technician.

What do I need to do to prepare for the test?

There is very little preparation needed but you may be asked to wear something with short or loose sleeves. If you wear trousers it is useful if the legs can be rolled up. You may eat and drink normally before the test. Just before the test you will be asked to remove your socks/stockings and shoes.

How long will it take?

The actual Doppler test may only take 30 minutes but you must allow at least an hour. This is so there will be time for you to rest before your blood pressure is recorded.

What will happen?

You will be asked to lie down and rest for about 20 minutes so your blood pressure settles. It may be a good idea to visit the toilet first to ensure you are comfortable. During this time, you may be asked questions about your health.

You will then have a blood pressure cuff applied to your arm. Instead of using a stethoscope the Doppler sensor/probe is used to listen to your blood flow. To allow the sensor/probe to pick up a signal a small amount of gel is used on your skin. When the pressure is being measured you will be able to hear the sound of your blood as it moves through the blood vessels. If you would prefer not to hear this just mention this to the person performing the test. The pressure is measured in both arms.

The pressure is then measured in both legs. The blood pressure cuff is then applied around your ankles and the sensor/probe and gel is used in the same way. You may only have problems with one leg, but it is important that the blood flow in both legs is checked.