



## **SRMC Physician Outlines Effects of Heart Disease on Wound Healing**

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An alarming 33 percent of Americans suffer from a cardiovascular disease that could inhibit their body's healing response.

According to William Lee, M.D., FACS, a board-certified general surgeon affiliated with Salem Regional Medical Center's (SRMC) medical staff and the SRMC Wound Healing Center, "Poor circulation can lead to skin changes on the feet and legs, including the development of sores or ulcers and non-healing wounds."



**Dr. Lee**

### **Venous Ulcers**

Chronic venous ulcers are the most common type of leg ulcer. They typically occur when the veins in the leg are weakened and do not circulate blood back to the heart normally, causing the blood to back up in the veins.

"Increased pressure and fluid in the affected area can result in a breakdown of the skin and an open sore," Dr. Lee explained.

A person's risk for developing venous ulcers increases with age. Other risk factors include obesity, diabetes, previous leg injuries and certain conditions such as varicose veins or a history of blood clots in the leg.

### **What Are the Symptoms?**

Venous ulcers usually form around the ankle or lower leg. Early signs of a developing venous ulcer include dark red or purple skin around the area of the trapped blood and pain, itching and swelling in the affected leg. Once an ulcer has formed, the sore may ooze or produce a foul-smelling discharge.

"It's important to contact your health care provider right away if you suspect an ulcer has developed. Because of fluid retention in the leg causing swelling, venous ulcers are often slow to heal and can become infected or keep recurring without the proper treatment," Dr. Lee said.

### **SRMC Offers Advanced Treatment for Venous Ulcers**

The specially-trained physicians and clinical staff at SRMC's Wound Healing Center are highly experienced in treating and healing acute, chronic or non-healing wounds, including venous leg ulcers.

“Treatment for venous ulcers often includes cleaning the wound, dressing the wound, and using compression stockings or bandages. This reduces swelling and improves blood flow in the legs, which promotes healing,” Dr. Lee explained. “Your doctor may also remove dead tissue from the wound, called debridement, to help the ulcer heal. In more serious cases, surgery may be needed.”

### **Prevention**

According to Dr. Lee, if you've previously had a venous leg ulcer or are at risk of developing one, it's important to take steps toward prevention. This includes:

- Losing weight if you are overweight
- Exercising as much as you can (as recommended by your doctor)
- Avoiding smoking
- Raising (elevating) your legs for a short time, especially if you've been standing all day
- Wearing compression stockings
- Keeping your blood sugar levels under control if you have diabetes

“Also, check your feet and legs daily for cracks, skin discoloration, swelling or sores, and report any changes to your health care provider immediately,” he advised.

### **About Dr. Lee**

In addition to his role at SRMC's Wound Healing Center, Dr. Lee provides a full range of advanced surgical procedures and endoscopy services as a general surgeon with Salem General Surgery. He sees patients in Salem at 2094 East State Street, Suite A, and in Columbiana at Firestone Farms TownCenter, 116 Carriage Drive. For more information, call 330-337-2868 or visit [www.salemgeneralsurgery.com](http://www.salemgeneralsurgery.com).

### **About SRMC's Wound Healing Center**

Since its launch in 2012, Salem Regional Medical Center's Wound Healing Center has made a difference in the lives of more than 2,700 area patients with acute, chronic or non-healing wounds. With an average wound healing success rate over 95%, the Center offers hyperbaric oxygen therapy and other leading edge treatments for these types of wounds, which include diabetic, venous/arterial and pressure ulcers; osteomyelitis; radionecrosis; infections; compromised skin grafts and flaps; insect bites; thermal burns; and wounds that have not healed in 30 days.

SRMC's Wound Healing Center is recognized as a “Center of Distinction” by Healogics, Inc., the nation's leading and largest wound care management company. The center earned this prestigious national award by consistently demonstrating clinical excellence in wound healing and superior patient satisfaction rates.

For more information about the specialized care provided at SRMC's Wound Healing Center or to make an appointment, call 330-332-7415.