



## KCHS Wound Care: The Heart of Wound Care

*KCHS Wound Care recognizes American Heart Month by teaching community about cardiovascular care and wound healing.*

A healthy heart helps keep oxygen and nutrient-rich blood flowing through the body, a vital component of the healing process. Because healthy circulation is at the heart of every healed wound, prioritizing heart health is key to preventing and treating wounds.

“Any disease that disrupts blood circulation affects how long it will take for a wound to heal,” said Sally Farquhar, APRN, Wound Care Specialist. “Poor heart health means poor wound healing rates—and poor wound healing may result in an escalation of the patient’s condition.”

Nearly half of all Americans have at least 1 of 3 risk factors of heart disease: high blood pressure, high cholesterol and smoking.<sup>1</sup> To decrease risk and encourage heart health, KCHS Wound Care suggests that patients:

- eat a heart-healthy diet full of fruits, vegetables, lean meats and whole grains.
- exercise at least 30 minutes a day.
- maintain a healthy weight.
- quit tobacco use.
- get adequate sleep.
- get regular health screenings.

For patients with non-healing wounds, wound care is essential. The KCHS Wound Care provides a comprehensive approach to wound healing. The team features clinicians with advanced training in wound care.

KCHS Wound Care at Kearney County Health Services is open each Tuesday from 8am-4pm. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 308.832.6535. No referral is required.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/risk\\_factors.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/risk_factors.htm)

## Heart Disease and Ulcers

Heart disease is a broad term which encompasses many conditions affecting the heart, including diseases of the heart muscle, blood vessel diseases, heart rhythm defects, and infections of the heart.<sup>1</sup> One of the complications of heart disease is poor blood flow throughout the body, which can result in a non-healing wound.<sup>2</sup> Two of the most common non-healing wounds that occur as a result of heart disease are arterial ulcers and venous ulcers, which commonly form on the legs and feet.<sup>2</sup>

Venous ulcers, the most common type of leg ulcers, occur when swelling, due to damaged valves of the lower leg veins, is uncontrolled.<sup>3</sup> This can cause blood to pool in the ankles and fluid to leak into the surrounding tissue. This fluid breaks down the tissues, and an ulcer forms. Venous ulcers are typically found along the inside of the lower leg, below the knee. Leg swelling, pain, tingling and discoloration are signs of increased blood pressure in the lower extremities. Decreasing the blood pressure in the leg by elevating the limb and compression therapy can help treat venous ulcers, along with other specialized wound care therapies.

An arterial ulcer is commonly caused by clogged arteries. When an artery is clogged, it decreases the blood flow, which can cause tissues to be damaged and an ulcer to form. An arterial ulcer is typically found on the lower leg or foot and is often located over the top of the toes or the ankle. These ulcers may not heal with standard wound care alone; specialized wound care may be required to improve blood flow to the ulcer which will support the healing process. Surgery may also be required to clear the blockage in the artery or to bypass the blockage.<sup>4</sup>

For patients with arterial and venous ulcers, wound care is essential. Infection is a great concern for non-healing chronic ulcers and may be treated with antibiotics. The appropriate wound dressings and treatment plan are critical in healing both types of chronic, non-healing wounds.

For more information on wound care services, please call KCHS Wound Care at 308.832.6535 or visit [www.kchs.org/wound-care](http://www.kchs.org/wound-care).

## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup><https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/heart-disease/symptoms-causes/syc-20353118>

<sup>2</sup><https://swmconline.com/news/heart-related-chronic-wounds>

<sup>3</sup><https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/17169-leg-and-foot-ulcers>

<sup>4</sup>[https://www.vascularsociety.org.uk/patients/conditions/12/arterial\\_ulcer](https://www.vascularsociety.org.uk/patients/conditions/12/arterial_ulcer)