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# Peripheral Vascular Disease

Patient name: \_\_\_\_\_ Admission: \_\_\_\_\_

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- I. **The client/caregiver can define peripheral vascular disease.**
  - A. It is diminished blood supply to or from the lower extremities.
  - B. It can involve either the veins or the arteries.
  
- II. **The client/caregiver can recognize the signs and symptoms.**
  - A. Arterial insufficiency
    - 1. Sharp pain that increases after exercise
    - 2. Cool, pale skin
    - 3. Absent or diminished pulse in legs and feet
    - 4. Reddish-blue color of skin
    - 5. Delayed healing
    - 6. Decreased capillary filling time
  - B. Venous insufficiency
    - 1. Aching, cramping-type pain
    - 2. Edema
    - 3. Mottled and pigmented skin
    - 4. Ulcers close to the ankle
  
- III. **Client/caregiver can list measures for management of disease.**
  - A. Prevent decreased circulation
    - 1. Avoid smoking.
    - 2. Avoid constrictive clothing.
    - 3. Never cross legs.
    - 4. Avoid letting lower extremities to be exposed to extreme temperatures.
    - 5. Avoid long periods of sitting or standing.
    - 6. Eat a diet low in cholesterol, fats, and sodium (nutrition guides for specific diets).
  - B. Promote increased circulation
    - 1. Walking as ordered by physician.
    - 2. Wear support hose.
    - 3. Perform Buerger-Allen exercises.
      - a. Prop legs in elevated position; hold legs at approximately 45 degrees for 1 minute to drain blood.

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- b. Sit with legs dangled on side of bed. Stretch feet downward holding for 30 seconds, and then stretch feet inward, outward, and upward, holding each position for 30 seconds.
    - c. Lie flat on back with legs straight for 1 minute.
  - C. Prevent injury to lower extremities
    - 1. Never go barefooted.
    - 2. Cut toenails carefully straight across after soaking them for 10 minutes.
    - 3. Wear well-fitting shoes with hose or stockings.
    - 4. Avoid scratching lower extremities.
    - 5. See a podiatrist for corns, calluses, ingrown toenails, and so forth.
    - 6. Avoid use of hot water bottles or heating pad.
    - 7. Wash feet carefully and pat dry. Observe for any redness or open areas.
    - 8. Wear clean cotton socks.
  - D. Take medications as ordered.
  - E. Obtain laboratory tests as ordered, and attend follow-up appointments with physician.
- IV. **The client/caregiver is aware of possible complications.**
- A. Ulcers
  - B. Cellulitis
  - C. Gangrene
  - D. Thrombophlebitis
  - E. Embolism

**RESOURCES**

American Heart Association  
[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

National Institutes of Health  
[www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov)

(Continued)

American Dietetic Association  
[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

Support groups for weight reduction or cessation of smoking

Stress management

Exercise classes at local YMCA

## REFERENCES

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