

Venous and Arterial Ulcer Characteristics

Since the characteristics of venous and arterial ulcers are very different, a physical examination will determine the ulcer type.

Venous Ulcer Characteristics

Ruddy color base

Brown staining on skin

Shallow wound

Irregular wound margins

Moderate to heavy exudate

Pitting/nonpitting edema

Warm skin temperature

Granulation tissue present

Critical colonization may lead to infection

Minimal to severe pain

Pedal pulses present

Capillary refill normal

Arterial Ulcer Characteristics

Pale base color when elevated

Shiny, taut skin

Deep wound

Punched out appearance

Minimal exudate

Variable edema

Cold skin temperature

Rare presence of granulation tissue

Infection frequent

Pain present with rest and exercise

Pedal pulses diminished or absent

Capillary refill delayed