# Red Flags for Potential Serious Conditions in Patients with Knee, Leg, Ankle or Foot Problems

## Medical Screening for the Knee, Leg, Ankle or Foot Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Red Flag Data obtained during Interview/History</th>
<th>Red Flag Data obtained during Physical Exam</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fractures(^1\text{-}^4)</td>
<td>History of recent trauma: crush injury, MVA, falls from heights, or sports injuries. Osteoporosis in the elderly.</td>
<td>Joint effusion and hemarthrosis. Bruising, swelling, throbbing pain, and point tenderness over involved tissues. Unwillingness to bear weight on involved leg.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peripheral Arterial Occlusive Disease(^5\text{-}^9)</td>
<td>Age &gt; 55 years old. History of type II diabetes. History of ischemic heart disease. Smoking history. Sedentary lifestyle. Co-occurring intermittent claudication.</td>
<td>Unilaterally cool extremity (may be bilateral if aorta is site of occlusion). Prolonged capillary refill time (&gt;2 sec). Decreased pulses in arteries below the level of the occlusion. Prolonged vascular filling time. Ankle Brachial index &lt; 0.90.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deep Vein Thrombosis(^10\text{-}^{11})</td>
<td>Recent surgery, malignancy, pregnancy, trauma, or leg immobilization.</td>
<td>Calf pain, edema, tenderness, warmth. Calf pain that is intensified with standing or walking and relieved by rest and elevation. Possible pallor and loss of dorsalis pedis pulse.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compartment Syndrome(^12\text{-}^{14})</td>
<td>History of blunt trauma, crush injury - or - Recent participation in a rigorous, unaccustomed exercise or training activity.</td>
<td>Severe, persistent leg pain that is intensified with stretch applied to involved muscles. Swelling, exquisite tenderness and palpable tension/hardness of involved compartment. Paresthesia, paresis, and pulselessness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Septic Arthritis(^15)</td>
<td>History of recent infection, surgery, or injection. Coexisting immunosuppressive disorder.</td>
<td>Constant aching and/or throbbing pain, joint swelling, tenderness, warmth. May have an elevated body temperature.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cellulitis(^16)</td>
<td>History of recent skin ulceration or abrasion, venous insufficiency, CHF, or cirrhosis. History of diabetes mellitus.</td>
<td>Pain, skin swelling, warmth and an advancing, irregular margin of erythema/reddish streaks. Fever, chills, malaise and weakness.</td>
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</tbody>
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**References:**