

Varicose Veins

Varicose veins, (also called “spider veins”), are caused by the inability of the veins close to the surface of the skin (“superficial veins”) in the legs to bring blood from the legs back to the heart. This is usually caused by defective one-way valves in the superficial veins. Blood pools in these veins due to gravity, and causes them to bulge. This starts out as a cosmetic problem, but can quickly progress to cause problems.

Symptoms can include pain in the legs made worse by standing; swelling; feeling of tiredness, heaviness, or throbbing in the legs; leg cramps; and restless legs. Sometimes, sores can develop on the legs and ankles.

We don’t know what causes varicose veins. Several things contribute to its development.

- Heredity (family history) plays a major role.
- Hormonal changes associated with puberty, pregnancy, and menopause
- Age, obesity, injury and standing for a long time

In the early stages, varicose veins may be treated with special stockings, elevating the leg, and losing weight. But the main treatment is surgical. Common surgical treatment options include laser treatment, Trivex, same-day phlebectomy, sclerotherapy, and vein stripping.

Laser ablation is a minimally invasive procedure. (This means that only a small incision is made.) A small laser fiber is inserted into the damaged vein, causing it to seal shut. This surgery takes about an hour. Most people return to normal activities within a few days.

Trivex, or transilluminated power phlebectomy, uses light-enhanced visualization and a power tool to cut and suction out damaged veins. This method offers minimal bleeding and a quicker recovery compared to traditional methods.

Same-day phlebectomy involves the surgical removal of surface varicose veins done under local anesthesia. Veins are removed through small punctures made in the skin. This procedure is usually combined with laser ablation or vein stripping.

Sclerotherapy is a procedure in which a sticky liquid is injected into the affected veins. This causes the veins to collapse and seal shut. This prevents blood from entering the defective veins. There is a risk that these veins will open over time.

Vein stripping, or traditional varicose vein surgery, is a same-day procedure performed under general or local anesthesia. A number of incisions are made in the skin alongside the vein, and the whole vein is stripped out.

A doctor can assess the condition and help decide an appropriate treatment plan. The doctor will decide which surgical procedure is best. This depends on the site, type, severity and extent of the varicose veins. It also depends on the patient’s general condition, state of health, and whether the patient has other diseases.