
Varicose veins treatment

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Varicose veins are abnormally enlarged superficial veins usually seen in the thigh and leg. In the majority of cases, these large superficial veins are of a cosmetic nuisance. These veins connect with the deep veins of the leg and play a minor role in the transfer of blood to the heart. The veins become more prominent in the 3-4 decade of life and are more common in females.

In the majority of cases, the varicose veins worsen with time. The varicose veins start to become more prominent and swell. With time, the veins are engorged with blood and can cause localized pain and itching. Once the veins become prominent, it is very unlikely that they will spontaneously resolve without any treatment. The cause of varicose veins is unknown but is definitely linked to increase pressure in the veins.

There are valves in the veins which prevent the back flow of blood back into the legs. When these valves become damaged/defective, the blood flows backwards and causes swelling and engorgement of the veins. Aside from being unattractive, varicose veins may be responsible for leg aches, a feeling of heaviness or fatigue of the legs.

The majority of individuals will complain of leg ache at the end of the day. Symptoms are often worse after prolonged standing and may include feelings of fatigue, heaviness, aching, burning, throbbing, itching, cramping, and restlessness of the legs.

With time, darkening or hyperpigmentation around the ankles is a classic feature of prolonged varicose veins. Hemorrhoids are analogous to varicose veins and involve engorgement of veins in the rectum. Varicose veins do not cause joint pains or a decrease in blood supply to the legs. There are many options in the treatment of varicose veins. If the saphenous vein is very "thick and rope like", stripping may be the best option. This is a surgical procedure and the most invasive. If only the valve in the vein is defective, the vein can be tied off in the groin and the few superficial veins can be removed by small incisions. This also requires surgery and moderate amount of anesthesia. It preserves the vein for future use.

The latest technology of varicose vein removal is using ultrasound with laser or radiofrequency ablation. In both techniques, the vein is burnt away. Both procedures are relatively painless and destroy the vein in the thigh. In the majority of cases, varicose veins are of a cosmetic nuisance. Varicose veins generally tend to get worse without any treatment. Those who do not get them treated are more likely to develop:

constant itching

pigmentation around the ankles

ulcers at the ankles

mild swelling of the feet

occasional blood clots in the veins

infection of the vein

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