



Varicose Veins

Pre-Assessment Departments

www.ulh.nhs.uk

References

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet please email patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk

The Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is accurate and impartial.



If you require this information in another language, large print, audio (CD or tape) or braille, please email the Patient Information team at patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk

Aim of the leaflet

This leaflet aims to provide further information for patients undergoing surgery for varicose veins.

It aims to explain the procedure and what to expect afterwards.

What are varicose veins?

Varicose veins are veins in your leg, which have become swollen, unsightly and have begun to cause you pain and discomfort.

Why do I need varicose vein surgery?

The varicose veins will continue to cause pain and discomfort, in some cases they may perforate and bleed.

Do I need to have surgery or is there any other treatment available?

Compression stockings may ease the aching and symptoms, but will not get rid of the varicose veins. It is possible to have some varicose veins injected but you must discuss this with the doctor.

What are the benefits of having varicose vein surgery?

It will remove the swollen veins and you should not have any further aching or pain. However, this is not cosmetic surgery.

Contact details

If you have any questions about any of the information contained in this leaflet please contact:

Pre-Assessment Nurses: 9.00am to 5.00pm

Pilgrim Hospital01205 445714

Grantham Hospital 01476 464844 or 464851

Lincoln County Hospital01522 573595

County Hospital Louth..... 01507 600100 or 631441 or 631225

Are there any long lasting effects?

It is unusual to have any long term effects once the varicose veins have been removed. However, it is possible for your varicose vein to reoccur.

If you have had a general anaesthetic, for 24 hours after your operation

DO NOT:

- Drive (you are not covered by your insurance) or ride a bicycle
- Drink alcohol or smoke
- Travel by public transport
- Make any important decisions or sign any documents
- Go out unaccompanied
- Operate any machinery - including domestic appliances

ALSO:

- Beware of feeling dizzy
- Take care with cookers, kettles, fires etc
- You should not be going to work or looking after young children or dependants
- Please arrange for your relative/friend to stay with you overnight/24 hours

Are there any risks involved?

Complications are unusual, but are rapidly recognised and dealt with by the nursing and medical staff.

- Bleeding from the wound sites
- Wound infection is a rare problem and settles down with antibiotics in a week or two
- Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) may occur in your leg but risks are reduced if you follow instructions and advice
- It is possible for varicose veins to develop again after surgery
- Aches and twinges may be felt in the wound for up to six months
- Occasionally there is numbness in the skin, where a skin nerve has been damaged by one of the tiny skin cuts. This improves in up to a year but is permanent in a few patients

Getting ready for your operation

You may be asked to attend a pre-assessment clinic where your medical history will be noted and your operation explained. Any necessary tests e.g. blood tests, ECG (tracing of your heart) will be carried out. You may also be asked to sign a consent form for your operation. Please make sure you understand your operation before signing your consent form. The medication you are currently taking will be discussed and advice given as necessary, please bring all medication with you. If you are not asked to attend a pre-assessment clinic all the above will be carried out when you are admitted for your operation.

What sort of anaesthetic will I have?

The operation is normally performed under general anaesthetic. This means that you will be fully asleep while the operation is carried out. Not all patients are suitable for general anaesthetic and they may require a spinal anaesthetic. This means you will be numb from the waist down and feel nothing during the operation. One of the anaesthetists will see you before the operation and discuss which is suitable for you.

What should I expect after the operation?

- You will have bandages/compression stockings from your foot to your thigh
- You may have stitches in your wounds. The doctor or nurse will advise you if they need to be removed or if they will dissolve before you go home
- Some pain in the wounds is inevitable. Painkillers will help to control this
- You should be able to drink soon after returning to the ward and eat within two hours, providing that you do not feel sick

How long will I stay in hospital?

Most patients go home on the day of the operation, but in some circumstances you may be required to stay overnight. Your doctor will advise you which is more suitable.

How long will it take me to recover?

- You are likely to feel tired and need to rest for the first day or two
- When you are sitting down, sit with your feet up, higher than your bottom
- You need to walk normally following your operation as much as possible. Do not stand for any length of time
- If you go home on the day of your operation the District Nurse may call and see you sometime during the next day
- Before you go home the nursing staff will give you an instruction/advice leaflet regarding the care of your dressing/bandages/stockings

When will I be able to go back to work?

You should be able to return to a light job after about one week and any heavy job within four weeks.

Will I be able to drive?

You can drive as soon as you can make an emergency stop without discomfort in the wound. Most people can drive after about one week.

You may need to contact your GP if:

- You develop a large amount of bleeding from your wounds
- You develop severe pain or swelling in your leg which isn't relieved by your painkillers
- You develop numbness, pins and needles or your toes become blue in colour