

Patient information

Varicose vein surgery

Varicose vein surgery – on the long saphenous varicose veins

The long saphenous vein starts at the groin, runs underneath the skin of the thigh and calf and ends at the foot.

What are they?

Varicose veins are very common, affecting at least 10 to 15% of the adult population in the UK. This condition can be embarrassing and painful and, if left untreated, can lead to leg swelling, pigmentation of the skin and ulcers.

Elevation of the legs and the use of elastic stockings can reduce the symptoms.

In some cases, surgery may be required under general anaesthetic and the weakened vein is removed, known as 'stripping and avulsions'.

The intended benefits of the procedure are to remove the unsightly / uncomfortable veins from your leg, and prevent their growth or recurrence.

Risks from this surgery can be that the small nerves next to the veins can be disturbed leading to numbness in 10 - 20% of patients. This usually resolves over the year, but occasionally, it is permanent.

Bruising and soreness is to be expected. The severity depends on the number of veins removed.

A thrombosis can occur in the deep veins of the leg (DVT) and occasionally this can lead to a pulmonary embolus (blood clot on the lung). Blood clots on the lung can be fatal. This occurs in less than 1% of patients.

Your surgery

This is done by making an incision in the skin crease of the groin to dissect the long

saphenous and femoral veins and disconnect them. The long saphenous vein is then stripped to just below the knee to remove it from the thigh altogether. Research studies show that this reduces the chances of the veins growing back - recurrent varicose veins. Multiple small incisions (2 - 5mm long) are then made to remove the veins from the lower leg- these are known as avulsions.

Compression bandages are then applied to the leg to help prevent bleeding and bruising post operatively.

Post-operative discharge advice

Groin area advice

Stitches.....

Steristrips.....

Dressing

Leg area advice

Stitches.....

Steristrips.....

Dressing

The operation sites need to be kept clean and dry. Please leave any dressings intact and follow the compression stocking advice written below:

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The purpose of these stockings is to support the leg, to help blood flow through the deep veins of the leg and reduce the amount of bruising and tenderness. At night they can be removed if this is more comfortable.

Bleeding through the bandages or stocking can occur, this is not unusual. Elevate / raise the leg; apply continuous pressure to the point of bleeding for 10 - 20 minutes.

When can you bath / shower?

You may experience some mild to moderate pain. This can be relieved by taking painkillers and on discharge you may be given 3 - 5 days supply to take home. paracetamol or a similar pain relieving medication is appropriate should you

experience further pain when your initial supply of tablets is finished. We recommend you have a supply of paracetamol and/or ibuprofen at home.

One of the side effects of taking painkillers can be constipation. It is important you do not strain and to help prevent this we encourage you to eat a balanced diet with fresh fruit and vegetables, and drink plenty of fluids. If you are still experiencing problems, your local pharmacy will advise on any short-term medication.

When you are resting elevate/raise your legs on a stool or the sofa. Avoid crossing your legs and avoid standing for long periods of time.

When standing still, keep your legs moving by gently marching on the spot.

You may drive when you can safely perform an emergency stop and can turn round to reverse safely.

Outpatient appointment
This will be sent to you.

Return to work.....

Contact your GP or GP out-of-hours service if:

- You have severe pain.
- Any of your operation sites become increasingly swollen, red, hot and/or produces a discharge - you may have an infection.
- Bruising is severe.

If you require any further advice, please contact the Martin Corke Day Surgery Unit on 01284-713050 between 7.45am and 8.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Or the vascular secretary on 01284 713521 9.00am and 4.00pm Monday to Friday.

Outside of these hours contact the surgical ward F5 on 01284 713262 and speak to the nurse in charge. Please have your hospital number on the discharge letter available.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)
<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>

