

## Patient information

# Radio frequency ablation of varicose veins (VNUS procedure) and Foam Sclerotherapy

### Before the procedure

Please do not use skin moisturiser on the day of your procedure.

You will be measured for support stockings to wear after the procedure.

While the procedure is generally not particularly painful, there is some post-operative discomfort. We recommend you have a supply of paracetamol and ibuprofen to take when you get home.

### What is a VNUS closure procedure?

VNUS is a minimally invasive treatment for varicose veins. It involves inserting a catheter into the faulty vein which is then attached to a generator. Locally generated heat obliterates (closes) the vein and blood is redirected through nearby healthy veins as a result.

### During the procedure

An ultrasound scan will be used to mark the veins that require treatment. A local anaesthetic is used to numb the area and a small flexible wire will be passed into the vein. A fine tube is passed over this wire and then the VNUS probe is threaded through this tube. The position of the probe is checked and further local anaesthetic will be injected around the vein. The generator then creates heat energy to seal the vein from the inside. This takes a few minutes. You should not feel anything during the treatment. Once the vein has been sealed the probe is removed. Finally a bandage is applied to your leg.

### What are the benefits of VNUS?

VNUS can be performed under a local anaesthetic and normal activity can be resumed

straight away. VNUS closure has been shown to cause much less pain and bruising than conventional surgery or endovenous laser therapy. No groin incisions are needed which means you will have fewer scars. There is also less potential for complications such as pain or wound infections post-operatively.

## **What are the potential complications?**

There is a small chance that the vein will not be completely obliterated by the VNUS probe (this occurs in about 3% of patients).

Some patients have bruising and tenderness that lasts longer than 3 days. This is more common if you have had varicose veins removed at the same time as the VNUS procedure.

You may develop some discomfort around the obliterated vein 5-10 days after the procedure, due to inflammation. If this occurs you may require anti-inflammatory tablets such as ibuprofen.

About 1-5% of patients experience some numbness in the leg after the procedure. This is usually temporary, although it can be permanent.

There is a small risk (1%) of skin burns from the VNUS probe.

As with any surgical procedure there is a small risk of blood clots forming in the main leg veins (DVT) although this is less common after VNUS than conventional vein surgery.

The procedure is designed to reduce the pressure in the veins and will not necessarily get rid of any bulging veins in the lower leg. They often shrink but are still visible.

## **What is foam sclerotherapy?**

This works by injecting a chemical foam into the veins which causes them to collapse.

## **During the procedure**

Ultrasound is used to see the affected vein and the foam is injected into the vein under direct vision. This ensures the foam sclerosant is injected directly into the vein and shows that the treatment is complete.

Repeated injections may be necessary and, as this is a relatively new procedure, long term results are not yet available.

## What are the potential complications?

Bruising, swelling, phlebitis (infection of the vein) deep vein thrombosis and occasional reddish/brown staining to the skin are all possible complications of this procedure.

## After the procedure

You will be taken to the ward area for a short while after the operation. Once you are walking safely, you can go home. You should not drive yourself home and you should sit in the back seat with your legs up.

You can return to normal activities, including work, as soon as you like, but you should avoid contact sports, heavy exercise and swimming for up to 2 weeks.

Try to walk for about half an hour twice a day.

Elevate your legs when sitting and try to avoid long periods of standing still.

When the bandage is removed you may see some bruising or notice some hardness under the skin. This is quite normal and will gradually settle.

**Driving:** You can drive once the dressings have been removed, the soreness has subsided and you are able to safely perform an emergency stop.

**Airline travel:** Although the risk of blood clots is minimal with keyhole techniques, we do not advise patients to undertake air travel within 4 weeks of the procedure.

**Dressings:** Follow the instructions below for the removal of dressings and how to wear your stockings.

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**Outpatients appointment** .....

This will be sent to you.

## Contact your GP if:

- you have severe pain or

- severe bruising

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 (formerly DisabledGo)  
<https://www.accessable.co.uk>*



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