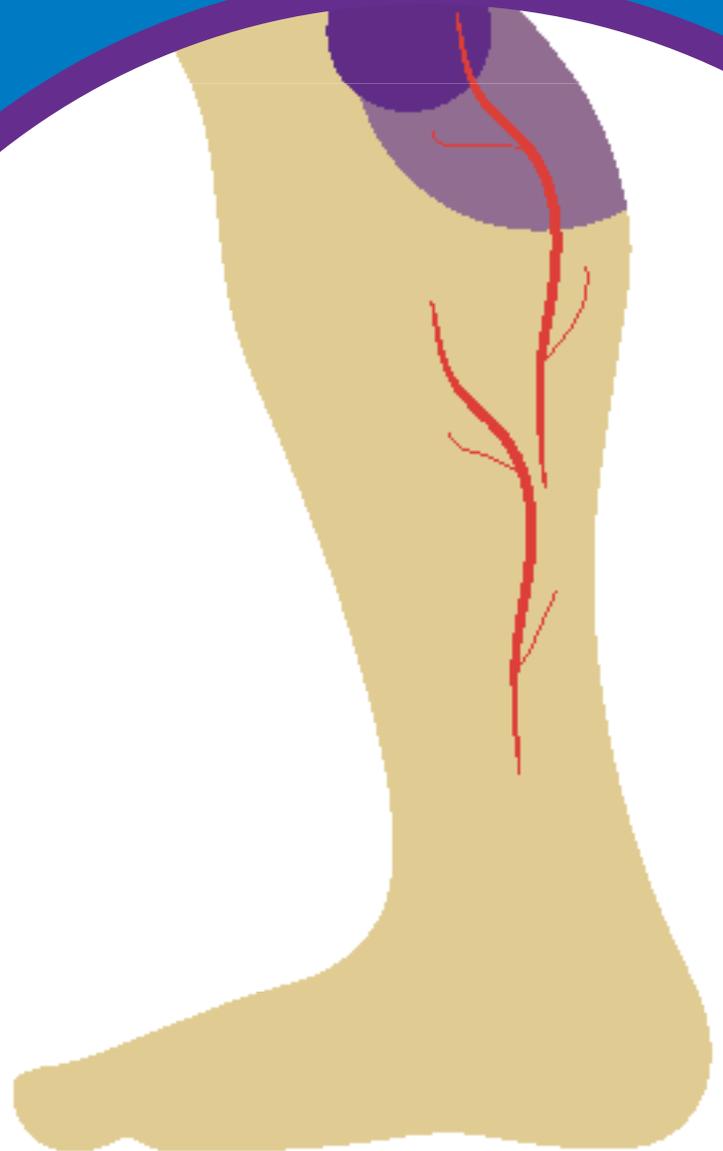


Varicose Veins:

An easy to
read guide



What are Varicose Veins?

Varicose veins happen when tiny valves are damaged and when blood flows backwards and collects in the vein.



They mostly occur in the legs and can cause pain

Looks like...

They can be a **dark purple** colour and **look lumpy, bulging** or twisted.

Feet and ankles may be **swollen**

Varicose veins can **look large and swollen**

Feels like...

Muscle cramp in your legs, particularly at night

There may be **dry, itchy** and thin skin over the vein

You may **feel burning** or throbbing in your legs

Your legs may be aching, **feel heavy** and uncomfortable

If you have any concerns, please speak to your GP

Self Care that could avoid an operation



Avoid standing still or sitting still for **long** periods



Be more active and move around **every 30 minutes**



If you feel worse, see your **family doctor**



Raise your legs up on pillows while resting - this will ease the pain



Take **regular breaks** through the day



You can buy Compression **tights** from chemists (pharmacies)

Compression **stockings** are available by GP prescription from the pharmacy

The criteria for treatment

- Varicose veins that have bled and might bleed again
- A history of varicose ulcers (when underlying flesh is visible)
- A change in appearance such as swelling or skin discolouration
- Loss of movement, reduced sensitivity or cramping

Information about your treatment

If your varicose veins need further treatment, or if they are causing complications, the type of treatment will depend on your general health and the size, position and severity of your veins.

A doctor who specialises in veins (a vascular specialist) will be able to advise you about the most suitable form of treatment for you.

One of the first treatments offered will usually involve ultrasound or laser treatment to seal the affected veins and this is carried out under local anaesthetic, so you won't feel any pain.

If you need surgery, this would be carried out under general anaesthetic and normally you can go home the same day.

You may need to wear compression stockings for up to a week after having treatment.

An alternative to having an operation - use compression stockings



- The stockings come in **different sizes**
- The stockings come in different pressures
- The stockings are tight at the ankle and looser as they go up your leg



- These relieve the pain
- Your **family doctor** or **chemist** will show you how to wear them
- The stockings come in different pressures



- Some stockings cover your whole foot
- Compression stockings – these squeeze your legs to make the **blood circulation better**.