



Carolina Vascular
surgery & diagnostics

Patient Information Sheet

If you have problems related to varicose and spider veins, you are not alone. Over 80 million Americans have some type of vein related disorder. Whether you are seeking treatment for symptoms related to your veins or simply to improve your appearance, we are here to help you. We offer the full spectrum of treatment options for venous disorders. Based on our evaluation we are able to tailor a treatment plan that best suits your needs.

What are Varicose and Spider Veins?

Normally, veins return blood from the legs back to the heart. Valves inside the veins allow the blood to move against gravity from the legs back to the heart. If these valves are defective blood can collect in the veins, which are quite thin walled. This excess blood inside the veins stretches the veins such that they begin to protrude and become visible under the skin. These swollen, discolored veins are called varicose veins.

Spider veins are smaller (usually less than 2 mm in diameter) and may occur in spite of normal vein valves. They can be flat or slightly raised with a red, blue or purple discoloration. Often spider veins have a starburst appearance.

Leg symptoms related to varicose veins include tiredness, heaviness, aching, burning, itching, swelling and cramping. Symptoms are made worse by prolonged standing or sitting. In more advanced cases, varicose veins can lead to skin rashes (dermatitis), color changes in the skin (hyperpigmentation), phlebitis (clots in the veins), bleeding and skin ulceration. Patients with spider veins are less likely to experience any symptoms.

Risk Factors for Varicose and Spider Veins

The tendency to develop varicose and spider veins is inherited from our parents. Women are more likely to be affected than man, likely due to hormonal influences. Pregnancy,

obesity, leg injury and long periods of standing or sitting may accelerate the appearance or aggravate the symptoms of the veins.

When and How are Veins Treated?

The physicians at Carolina Vascular Surgery & Diagnostics are experts in the diagnosis and management of venous disorders. Veins that cause symptoms or are cosmetically unattractive should be considered for treatment. Based on a noninvasive ultrasound exam (duplex) and a physician consultation we are able to recommend a treatment plan best suited to each individual patient. There are two basic treatment options, supportive and corrective. Some patients will require both supportive and corrective therapy. Supportive measures include exercise, elevation, support hose and moisturizing lotion. Corrective methods are used to remove or obliterate the abnormal veins. These include sclerotherapy, microphlebectomy, laser treatment, Trivex and stripping. Most of these are performed in our office as an outpatient procedure.

Sclerotherapy

Sclerotherapy involves injections into spider veins and smaller varicose veins. A tiny needle is placed into the vein and a chemical injected which irritates the lining of the vein. There is minimal discomfort and patients resume normal activity immediately after the procedure. Up to 20 separate injections may be performed at one time, and most patients will require 2 – 4 sessions to take care of their veins. Compressive dressings and/or medical compression stockings are worn following the procedure to assist in the obliteration of the veins. There may be bruising or increase in skin pigmentation following sclerotherapy. Bruising usually resolves in 1 – 2 weeks and almost always the pigmentation will fade over several months.

Microphlebectomy

Microphlebectomy involves the removal of larger varicose veins via tiny incisions that rarely even need suture to close. Over time these incisions heal such that the incisions are barely visible. This procedure can be performed under local anesthesia either in our office or as an outpatient procedure in the hospital.

Laser Treatment

The physicians at Carolina Vascular Surgery & Diagnostics are excited to be the first practice in Raleigh to offer the latest treatment option for varicose veins: the endovenous

laser. Laser treatment is a minimally invasive outpatient procedure performed in our office using local anesthesia. Patients are able to resume normal activity immediately following the procedure. The technique involves placement of a small laser fiber into the vein and using laser energy to obliterate the abnormal vein. With the advent of this treatment option, the traditional vein stripping will rarely be needed.

Trivex

Trivex is the manufacturer's name for a technique used to remove larger varicose veins via a limited number of incisions. Trivex is offered as an alternative to microphlebectomy in selected patients. The technique involves inserting a rotating catheter underneath the skin, which removes the varicose veins much like liposuction. This procedure is performed in the hospital as an outpatient using light general or spinal anesthesia.

Vein Stripping

Historically, stripping was used to treat patients with varicose veins. With the advent of treatments such as the endovenous laser few patients will need to undergo this procedure. Stripping involves making an incision in the groin and a second incision near the knee over the saphenous vein. A stripper is inserted into the vein between these two incisions and the vein actually removed. This is performed in the hospital as an outpatient using light general or spinal anesthesia.

Comprehensive Evaluation and Management of Varicose and Spider Veins

The physicians at Carolina Vascular Surgery & Diagnostics offer multiple modalities for the treatment of patients with varicose and spider veins. No two patients are alike and thus the treatment should be tailored to each individual. We offer a comprehensive program for evaluation and management of venous disorders. We look forward to the opportunity to assist you in developing a treatment plan that best suits your needs. Please contact our office:

Carolina Vascular Surgery & Diagnostics
2800 Blue Ridge Rd
Suite 500
Raleigh, NC 27607
(919) 235-3400
(800) (Toll free)
(919) 235-3401 (Fax)