

Varicose vein surgery

Insufficiency in the veins of the legs may cause the superficial veins to enlarge (varicose veins), swelling, pain, rash, and finally even a leg ulcer. As the valves in the veins fail, the blood stream is no longer directed towards the heart, and the blood returns down to the superficial veins of the legs causing symptoms.

The majority of varicose vein symptoms can be treated without surgery. Varicose veins that cause significant symptoms can be treated with an operation, in which the superficial veins causing the symptoms are removed or faulty perforating veins are closed.

Procedure

In the operation faulty superficial veins are pulled out after the connection of the faulty vein to the deep veins is closed. In most cases, the surgery is performed either in the groin on the long major surface vein or in the hollow (bend) of the knee on the short major surface vein. Alike, smaller varicose veins are removed through local incisions. **The procedure is generally performed under spinal anaesthesia.**

Recovery

You are given an **elastic stocking that reduces post-operative bleeding and swelling, improves circulation, and as a result, prevents new varicose veins.** You are usually recommended to wear the stocking night and day for the first two weeks. You will be given more detailed instructions on the use of the stocking at the ward.

You may move freely after the surgery. Daily walks and exercises contribute to your healing. You may gradually move to heavier physical exercises after two to three weeks. The wounds may initially be swollen and sore. You can alleviate these symptoms by avoiding long periods of sitting or standing, and for example, long car trips are not recommended. It is also advisable to put **your legs up from time to time.**

The leg will often be bruised and feels warm, as the hematoma spreads in the tissues under the skin. The hardenings and bruises disappear gradually by themselves and do not require treatment.

Wound care

The wounds usually have **absorbable sutures that do not have to be removed.** You may shower after two days. The folded bandages are to be removed before showering. After showering, dry the wounds by gently patting them with a clean towel, and put the elastic stocking back on.

The wounds may discharge during the first days, so it is recommended to use absorbing, folded bandages on them. Dry wounds no longer require folded bandages. Use loose-fitting clothes and shoes that do not pinch to prevent the wounds from getting chafed.

You may go to sauna after one week, after the wounds have healed.

Treatment of pain

Regular pain relief reduces pain and swelling, and makes moving easier. You are recommended to take pain killers regularly for 1–4 days and after that when necessary:

Paracetamol

Anti-inflammatory

Strong painkiller

Other medication

Follow-up visit is not usually required.

Sick leave is 2–4 weeks depending on the operation and your occupation.

Contact us

If you experience inflammatory symptoms (increasing pain, heavy swelling, warmth, redness, continuous wound discharge) or other problems, contact your health centre or treating unit.

Day Surgery Unit A2 on working days from 07.00–17.00 tel. **(06) 323 1552**

Vascular Surgery Outpatient Clinic on working days from 08.00–16.00 tel. **(06) 323 1534**

Emergency Department at other times tel. **(06) 323 1311**

Your own health centre or occupational health centre

We wish you happy healing!