

VARICOSE VEINS

ANATOMY

The circulatory stream consists of arteries and veins. Arteries run from the heart to supply oxygen to all the organs of the body. Veins carry the blood used by the organs, loaded with waste products, back to the heart.

The veins of the legs are equipped with one-way valves. Valves are double flaps formed from the walls of the vein. These two flaps meet at the center of the vein. They act like swinging doors, preventing blood from flowing backwards to the feet.

The calf muscles play a role in blood returning to the heart. When they contract, they compress the veins. The result is a pumping action pushing blood from the lower legs upwards, i.e., towards the heart.

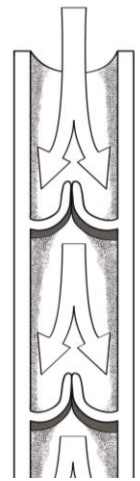


Image credit : Esther Marineau

VARICOSE VEINS

A varicose vein is a swollen vein that doesn't carry blood back to the heart because its valves can no longer close to prevent blood from flowing downward. Blood stagnates in the legs, causing pain, heaviness, and bluish veins under the skin forming a web-like pattern. Apart from the physical discomfort and esthetic concerns, varicose veins pose no particular danger.

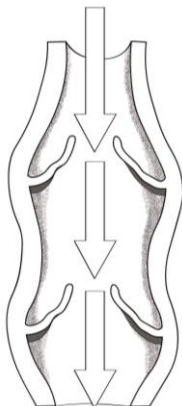


Image credit : Esther Marineau

RISK FACTORS FOR VARICOSE VEINS

- Heredity
- Being a woman
- Age
- Prolonged standing or sitting
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Obesity
- Pregnancy
- Thrombophlebitis

PREVENTING VARICOSE VEINS

Even if varicose veins have a hereditary component, they can be prevented.

1. STAY ACTIVE TO AVOID EXCESS WEIGHT.

In addition, avoid standing or sitting still for long periods of time.

2. WEAR COMPRESSION STOCKINGS

Compression stockings improve vein functioning by exerting constant pressure to help them return blood to the heart. The maximum compression is at the ankle and gradually decreases towards the top of the leg.

Your doctor will be able to guide you in choosing the degree of compression appropriate for you. The degree of compression will vary according to the severity of the venous insufficiency.

Having trouble putting on the stockings?

- Use textured rubber gloves.
- Use a donning aid (available in specialty stores).

3. ELEVATE YOUR LEGS.

Raising your legs above the level of the heart by resting your feet on a wall or a stool will reduce the pressure in the veins. This exercise can be repeated several times a day.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Treatment	Description and Indications	Type of Anesthesia	Convalescence	Cost
SURGERY				
Saphenectomy (stripping) AND varicose-vein ligation	Procedure consisting of removing the saphenous vein (superficial vein of the leg). To remove it, an incision is made in the groin, ankle, or knee.	General anesthesia OR Spinal anesthesia (injection into the spinal fluid)	2 to 3 weeks	Available in hospitals Covered by the RAMQ
ENDOVENOUS TREATMENT These are minimally invasive techniques that consist of destroying the vein wall by thermal or chemical burning directly through the interior of the vessel.				
Radio frequency OR Laser	For venous insufficiency of the great saphenous vein. Destroy the vein wall with a thermal burn.	Local anesthesia	2 days to 1 week	Only in private clinics Not covered by RAMQ

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS



Contact our team at 819-346-1110, extension 13085.



If you are concerned about your condition, go to the emergency room.

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Revision and layout

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