



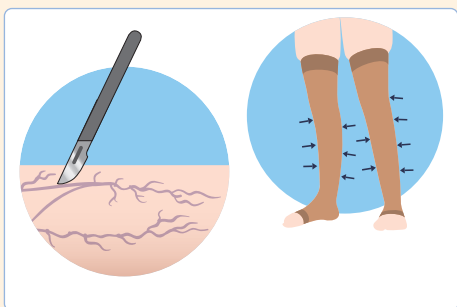
Making a decision about varicose veins

This leaflet is about **varicose veins**.

It is split into sections. You do not have to read it all at the same time. Read it with your carer or doctor or nurse or someone you trust.



It will help you decide about **treatment**.



There are different things you can do if you have **varicose veins**.

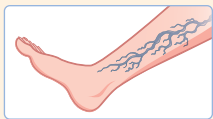


You can make a decision yourself about treatment.



Or you can make a decision with your carer or doctor or nurse.

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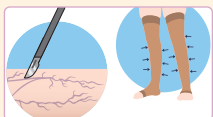
What can I do if I have varicose veins?

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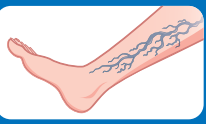
More information about treatments

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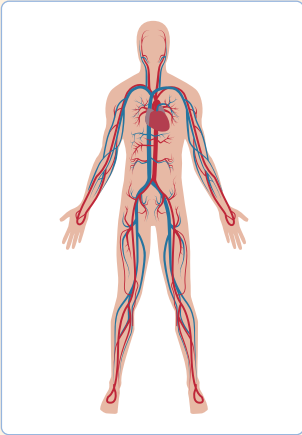


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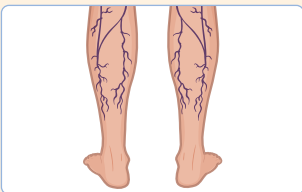


What are varicose veins?

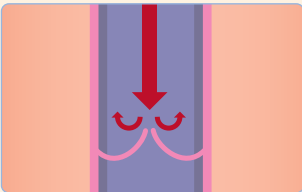


Your body has arteries and veins that carry blood around the body.

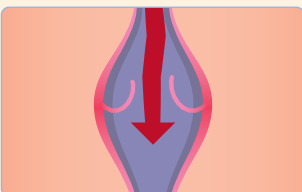
Veins take blood back to the heart from parts of the body like arms and legs.



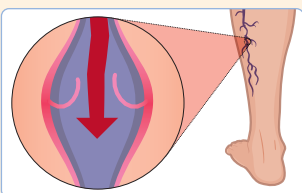
Varicose veins are when some veins do not work properly. They are usually in the legs.



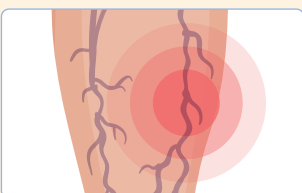
Veins have little valves in them to stop blood from flowing backwards. They look like this.



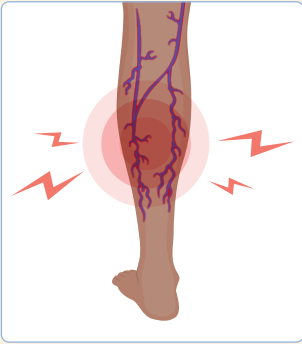
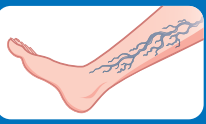
Varicose veins happen when these little valves do not work properly.



Blood can stay in the vein in one place instead of moving around the body.



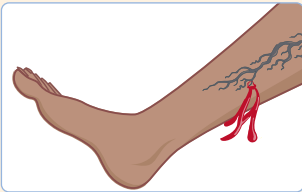
When blood stays in one place it can make the veins swollen and sometimes painful.



Varicose veins do not always cause pain. But sometimes varicose veins can make your legs feel:

- **itchy**
- **warm**
- **sore or painful**

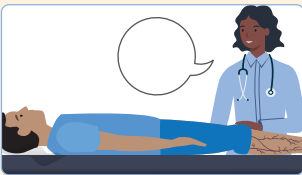
These are called symptoms.



Sometimes if you knock your legs they can bleed easily. This usually happens if your skin is thin.



If you have varicose veins and you have symptoms like these, see your doctor.



Your doctor will look at your legs and ask you some questions so that they can know if you have varicose veins.



Sometimes varicose veins can cause sores called **ulcers. Ulcers happen to 1 in 100 people.**

If you have varicose veins you should check your legs every day to look for sores called **ulcers**.



If you have varicose veins and you get a sore that does not go away, see your doctor.

Ulcers can be serious and take a long time to get better. You need to see a nurse at least once a week if you have an ulcer.



If you go to the doctor they will ask you some questions.

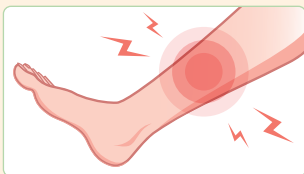
This page can help you prepare. Tick the box that relates to you. You can then share this page with your doctor.



I have itchy patches on my legs

Yes

No



My legs ache and hurt

Yes

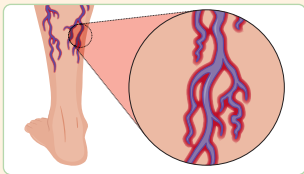
No



My legs or ankles are sometimes swollen

Yes

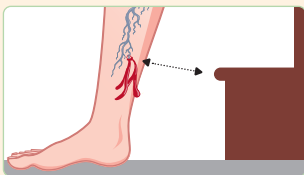
No



I can see veins in my legs and they are sometimes hot, red and tender

Yes

No



Sometimes my varicose veins cut or bleed easily when I hit my legs against something

Yes

No

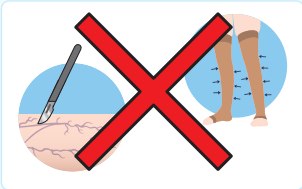




It is your choice. You can say yes or no to any treatment.

1 – No treatment at all

Always coloured blue in this leaflet

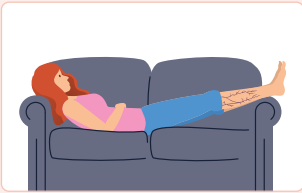


You can choose not to do anything.

If you don't do anything your varicose veins will not go away.

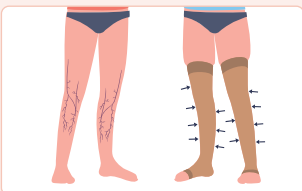
2 – Choose to do something yourself

Always coloured red in this leaflet



You can do things yourself to help with aches and pains:

- not standing still for too long
- not sitting down for too long
- putting your legs up, for example on the arm of the sofa, in the evenings



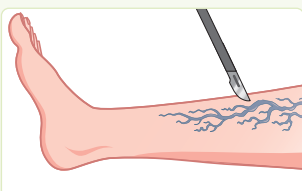
You can try special stockings for varicose veins.

These are very tight and can be difficult to put on. You would change them every 3 months. You wear them all day.

They won't get rid of varicose veins but they might help if the veins hurt.

3 – Go to the hospital for treatment

Always coloured green in this leaflet



A special doctor can do a treatment to remove your varicose veins.

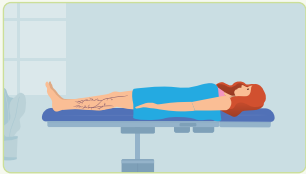
You would go to a hospital for this treatment.



At the hospital your doctor will look at your legs and suggest the best treatment for you.

It is your choice. You can say yes or no to this treatment.

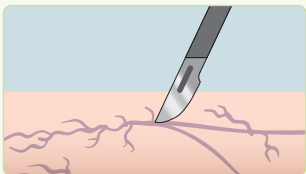
Treatment will either remove or close the varicose veins.



If you have treatment your doctor will ask you to lie down.



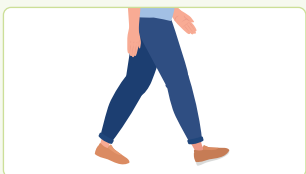
They will give you a local **anaesthetic**. This means you will not feel any pain when they do the treatment.



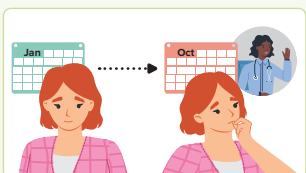
They will make tiny cuts and remove or close the veins.



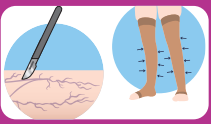
The operation takes about an hour. You then rest in the hospital for about an hour and then you can go home.



You will be able to walk as normal.



Your varicose veins might come back in the future. If this happens to you, see your doctor.

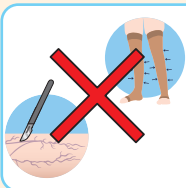


This section (pages 6 – 8) helps you compare treatments to help you decide what to do.



Will my symptoms get better?

Symptoms are things like pain, swelling and itching.



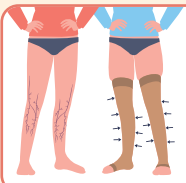
No treatment at all

0.5



0.5 no longer have symptoms

9.5 still have symptoms



Stockings

4



4 no longer have symptoms

6 still have symptoms



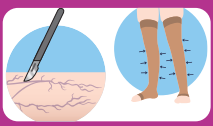
Treatment at hospital

8.5



8.5 no longer have symptoms

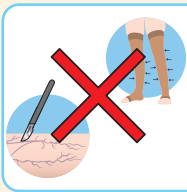
1.5 still have symptoms



This section (pages 6 – 8) helps you compare treatments to help you decide what to do.



If I had an ulcer, will I get another ulcer within one year?



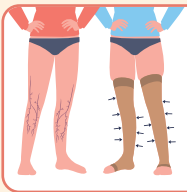
No treatment at all

4.5



4.5 do get another ulcer

5.5 do not get another ulcer



Stockings

3



3 do get another ulcer

7 do not get another ulcer



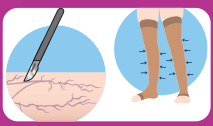
Treatment at hospital

1



1 does get another ulcer

9 do not get another ulcer



This section (pages 6 – 8) helps you compare treatments to help you decide what to do.

A complication is something you don't want to happen after a treatment, like pain, bruising or pins and needles.



If I have treatment in hospital for my varicose veins, will I get a complication?



Veins come back

2



2 people's veins **come back**

8 people's veins **do not** come back



Bruising
(within 3 weeks)

2.5



2.5 people have **bruising**

7.5 people **do not** have bruising



Pain
(within 1 – 2 weeks)

2



2 people have **pain**

8 people **do not** have pain



Pins & needles
(within 6 weeks)

0.5



0.5 people have **pins and needles**

9.5 people **do not** have pins and needles



Veins

are tubes called blood vessels. They carry blood around the body.

Varicose veins

are swollen veins. You can often see them just under the skin. They can be painful.

Ulcers

are sores. A bit like an ulcer you can get in your mouth. Varicose veins can cause ulcers on your legs.

Complications

are things you didn't want to happen after a treatment or operation. They include things like pain or bruising.

Specialist

is a special doctor. They know more about one particular condition. For example a special doctor who knows about varicose veins is called a vascular specialist.

Local anaesthetic

is a medicine your doctor can inject or sometimes put on your skin that makes that area numb. This is so that you will not feel pain.

Symptoms

are problems that can happen if you have a condition like varicose veins. They are things like swelling or pain.



Information about Varicose Veins

Leg Club

www.legclub.org/

NHS

www.nhs.uk/conditions/varicose-veins/

Why do my legs hurt?

www.legsmatter.org

Circulation Foundation

www.circulationfoundation.org.uk

Leg Ulcer Forum

www.legulcerforum.org

<https://zerotofinals.com/surgery/vascular/varicoseveins/>

Vascular Research UK YouTube channel

www.youtube.com/@VascularResearchUK

Contact details of my doctor or nurse

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What will happen next?

.....

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Funding NHS England

This EasyRead decision aid was created with input from easy readers and clinicians

For declarations of conflicts of interest, to see other decision support tools, or to find out more about how this one was created and where we got our numbers from, go to:

www.england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/shared-decision-making/decision-support-tools/