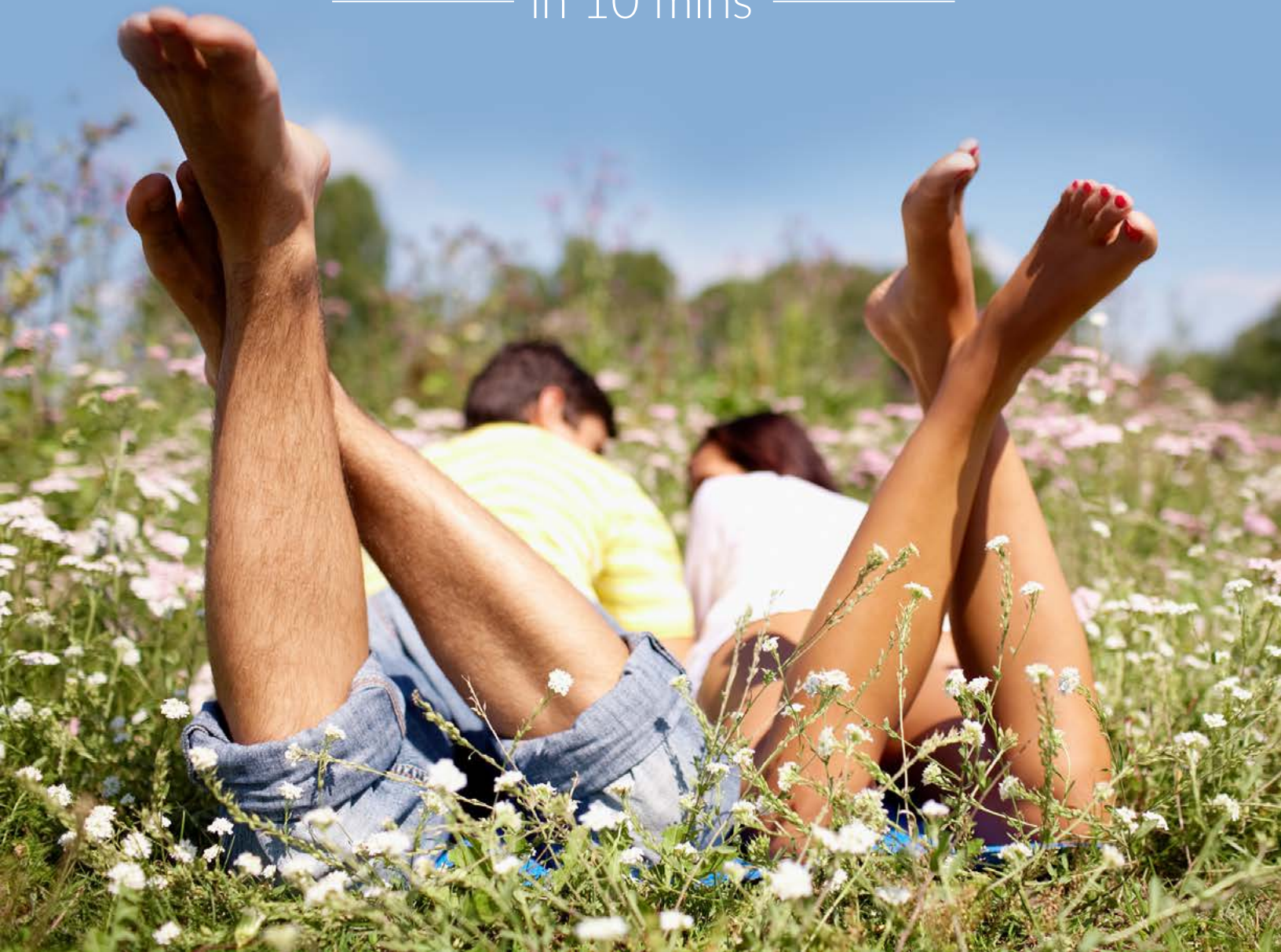


THE  
**Vein Institute**

Specialists in Varicose Vein Treatment

All you need to know about  
**Varicose Veins**  
& its treatments

———— in 10 mins ————



# Contents

---

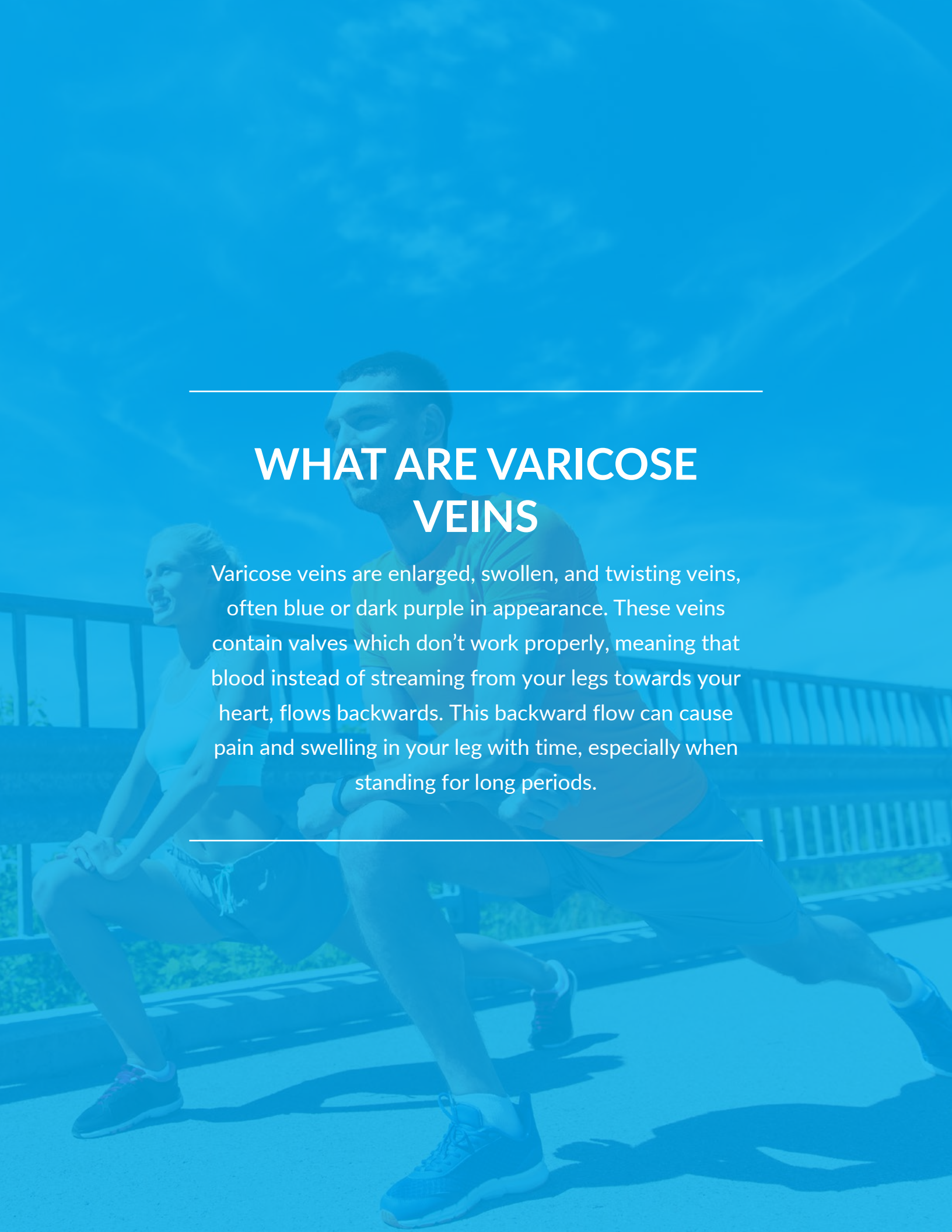
Symptoms and Causes .....	04
Risk Factors.....	05
Relief: The Top Five Tips.....	06
Compression Stockings or Bandages .....	08
New Surgery Free Treatments .....	10
Patient Outcomes .....	12

---

# WHAT ARE VARICOSE VEINS

Varicose veins are enlarged, swollen, and twisting veins, often blue or dark purple in appearance. These veins contain valves which don't work properly, meaning that blood instead of streaming from your legs towards your heart, flows backwards. This backward flow can cause pain and swelling in your leg with time, especially when standing for long periods.

---





# Symptoms and Causes



of the Australian population will suffer from vein disease during their lifetime.

Symptoms experienced by some patients with leg varicose veins include aching, pain or a feeling of heaviness in the legs. More serious symptoms include swelling in the lower legs, ankles and feet, a shiny, brown to blue discoloration of the skin of the lower leg, red, dry, itchy skin due to waste build-up in the leg, cramping, abnormal bleeding and longer healing time for a minor injury to the area.

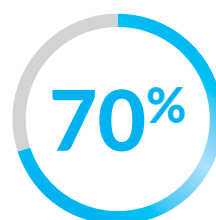
Researchers/doctors are still trying to determine what causes varicose veins but are still unsure. We know that it has to do with “inflammation” of the vein wall and vein valves eventually meaning that some veins don’t function properly.

Family history plays a big role in the development of varicose veins. Do your parents, grandparents or relatives have varicose veins? If they do, there is a high chance you will get them too.

“If conservative measures do not work then consider the new treatments in consultation with your doctor”. Also, if there is any swelling or hardening of the vein then medical attention should be sought.



## YOUR RISKS APPROXIMATELY ARE



if both parents have them,

or



if your mother has them.

# Risk Factors

---

The following are common risk factors associated with developing varicose veins:

## 01. WOMEN



Women have a greater chance of developing varicose veins than men do. Some doctors believe that this is because female hormones weaken the vessel walls and valves in the legs. So lifelong hormonal changes, pregnancy and then menopause can all contribute to the development of varicose veins in women. Taking birth control pills or hormone replacement therapy due to menopausal symptoms may also increase your risk for developing varicose veins.

## 02. AGE



Varicose veins tend to become more prevalent as you age. This does not mean that you can't develop them at a younger age but that the risk is higher as you age.

## 03. WEIGHT



If you are overweight or obese, you have a greater chance of developing varicose veins because the extra weight puts a lot of pressure on your legs.

## 04. CERTAIN JOBS REQUIRING LOTS OF STANDING



If you have a job where you have to stand all day and do not get to move around much, you could be at risk. Certain jobs such as hairdressing, nursing, office work, factory work means that you'll be on your legs a long time and so are more at risk of developing varicose veins. If you work in these jobs, you may want to consider getting compression socks which can reduce this risk.

# Relief: The Top Five Tips

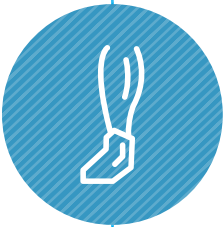
---



## 01. ELEVATE YOUR LEGS

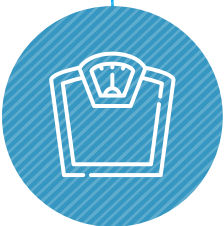
You can try to get relief from the symptoms of varicose veins by elevating your legs for several minutes throughout your day. Make sure to get them high enough that they are at a level that is above the level of your heart

**Especially after exercise:** This will take the pressure off your legs and make it easier for the valves to work and the blood to flow smoother



## 02. WALK EVERYDAY TO BUILD YOUR CALF MUSCLES

Your leg veins have to fight the effect of gravity and need all the help they can get. So keeping your leg muscles in shape and well-toned helps to relieve symptoms.



## 03. KEEP YOUR WEIGHT DOWN

If you gain weight or have a few too many kilos this may contribute to varicose veins as more pressure is placed on your legs. Make sure that you eat a healthy balanced diet and avoid excessive processed foods.



## 04. KEEP MOVING AT WORK

Try to keep your legs moving somehow. Flex your ankles a couple of times an hour while sitting at your desk to keep the blood pumping. Get up and walk around, too. This will not only help with blood circulation but will take some pressure off and decrease what's called dependent oedema (swelling of the lower legs, feet and ankles).

If you are on the other side of the spectrum and have a job where you rarely get to sit down, the same basic principles apply. Keep moving. When you are standing in the same position for several hours at a stretch you can do some deep knee bends or just flex your leg at the knee to help keep the blood moving.



## 05. WEAR COMPRESSION STOCKINGS

Whether sitting or standing at your job, wearing compression stockings will help your legs feel better by giving much needed support and aid the valves to keep the blood pumping out of your legs. See more below.

# Compression Stockings or Bandages

---

If you have varicose veins, the first course of treatment your doctor may suggest is the use of varicose vein compression stockings or bandages. Also known as compression socks they may help reduce the symptoms that you experience with varicose veins. Compression stockings do NOT stop the progression of the disease; they only minimize your symptoms.

## WHEN?

They are simple to use, you just put them on like a regular pair of socks. Put them on in the morning and take them off at bedtime. Using a glove can help to ease them onto your legs.

Compression stockings can and should be worn when taking a trip on an airplane or taking a long trip in a car to prevent blood clots from forming.

## HOW?

Get them on with no rolls or creases anywhere. Creases can cause a friction burn of the skin so it is important that there are no creases.

Varicose vein stockings, when worn correctly, apply pressure to your legs in a 'graduated' way. This means that the stockings are tighter at the ankle than they are at the knee. This gradient pressure helps the blood in your legs get pushed back up the leg towards the heart.

## GETTING THE RIGHT SIZE?

Using incorrectly fitted stockings will not benefit you so make sure you get them fitted by a clinic or pharmacy who specialise in stockings. You will usually need Class II compression stockings for regular use. If you have swelling you may want to try Class III.



## QUALITY?

The quality of the sock is really important as generally the cheaper stockings at chemists tend not to be as comfortable. Make sure you consider a mid to upper range stocking as the investment will certainly be worth it in the long run as they can be reused.

## COST?

Usually stockings which are of a good make are \$100 and above. Certain private health funds will cover you for the cost of stockings but do check with your private health fund first.



# New Surgery Free Treatments

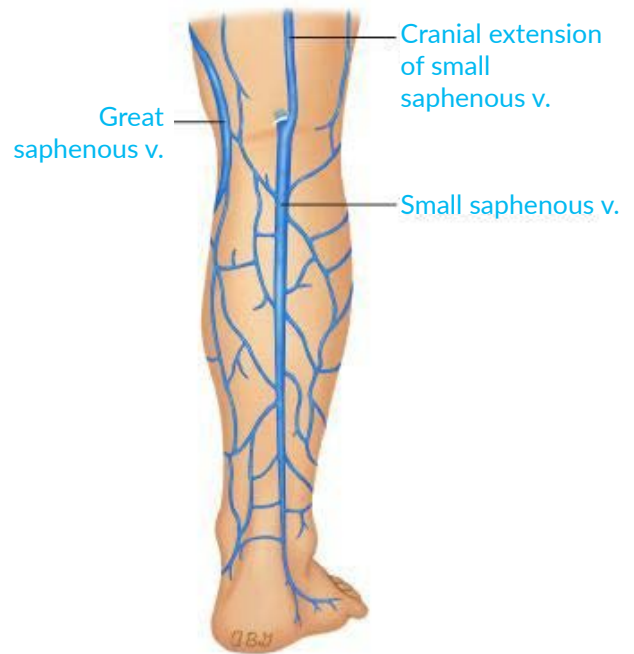
---

Obviously, before beginning any varicose vein treatment, you should first talk to your doctor to tailor the right treatment for you. Not all patients with varicose veins need treatment – but this will depend on a few factors including whether you mind the look of your veins or not.



## BEFORE,

Stripping was the most common procedure performed and was done to remove all or part of the “greater saphenous vein” or “small saphenous vein”. These are the veins usually affected by vein disease, with the greater saphenous vein running down the inside of your thigh to your ankle and the small saphenous vein running down the middle of your calf. Complications of stripping include deep vein thrombosis, or DVT, pulmonary embolism (which happens very rarely-0.06%) and infection of the surgical site. Stripping usually means that you will have to have a general anaesthetic and go into hospital. Time off work can be a week to a month owing to bruising and swelling.



## TODAY,

Surgery-free treatments include techniques with laser, medical adhesive (Venaseal) and/or medication.

A laser is gently inserted into the vein using local anaesthetic (so it's not painful) and then used to seal the vein. It can be done in a doctor's rooms with no need for hospitalization.

"Super glue" is a medical adhesive (Venseal) and one of the newest ways to treat varicose veins. The medical-grade adhesive is safe and remarkably effective, offering an alternative to surgery in many cases. It's strong, non-toxic and exceptionally good at "gluing" together biological tissue. It has been used in the field of brain surgeries for over 50 years.

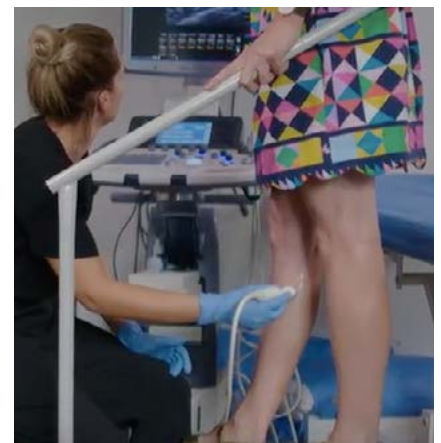
The results of laser and Venaseal are usually considered better than surgery by most vein experts around the world with the added benefit of not having time off work. These procedures are done in a doctor's clinic so you can usually resume your normal daily activities, with some exceptions like flying and taking a long car ride. Sometimes your doctor will also recommend injections. These injections treat side veins which cannot be treated with laser to maximize the overall outcome of treatment.

Three of the most popular treatments are called **Endovenous Laser Ablation, Venaseal** and **Foam Sclerotherapy**.

## How to get started

Get your veins scanned (First consultation)

Make sure that when you go for the appointment you take a list of all medications you are currently taking and any conditions you are being treated for by your regular doctor. Your first appointment is also the time to ask about the various treatments that are offered at the clinic. There are many available and the specialist should be able to give you his opinion on the treatment he thinks is the best for you based on his examination of your condition.





# Patient Outcomes

