
ENDOVENOUS THERMAL ABLATION OF THE SAPHENOUS VEIN

Patient Instructions

The following instructions are to help you prepare for your procedure and speed your recovery.

Before and During the Procedure:

- Please drink *plenty* of water the evening before the procedure so that you will be well-hydrated for the procedure. *Do not eat or drink **anything** after 12:00 midnight before your procedure.*
- Shave your legs (men generally use a clipper, not a razor) the night before your procedure. On the evening and morning of your procedure, shower and wash your legs thoroughly using hibiclens or antibacterial soap.
- Take your usual medications on the morning of your procedure with a small sip of water.
- Blood-thinning medications are continued during these minimally-invasive procedures.
- Notify Dr. Hayes' staff about any allergies or recent changes in your medications.
- Please bring shorts or loose-fitting clothing and slip-on shoes or house slippers to the Vein Center.
- Please bring all stockings that you have with you. If this is your first surgery you will receive a surgical stocking the day of your procedure. If you have received a blanket and bag from us, please bring them to all appointments.
- Please try and find a responsible adult to drive you to and from the Vein Center and stay with you the day and night of the procedure.
- Your venous ablation will be performed in one of the Vein Center procedure rooms. You will have monitors attached to record your blood pressure, pulse rate, and oxygen levels. You will likely be given intravenous conscious sedation. You may have trouble remembering the procedure, but **will not be completely asleep.**
- Endovenous Thermal ablation is performed using local anesthesia along the course of the diseased vein. As with any procedure, there will be discomfort associated with the placement of the anesthetic, and also with use of the ablation fiber/catheter.
- A surgical incision is generally not required. Only small punctures are made to both place the ablation fiber/catheter and to remove the ropey varicose veins. Sometimes a small incision is made at groin level to expose and ligate a large saphenous vein before positioning the ablation fiber/catheter.
- In order to remove the unsightly and painful varicose veins or other visible veins in the leg, many endovenous ablation procedures are accompanied by micro-phlebectomy, sclerotherapy, or both.
- Ultrasound is necessary during the procedure to access the diseased vein, to insert the ablation fiber/catheter, to place the local anesthetic around the vein, and to position the ablation fiber/catheter perfectly within the diseased vein.
- The ablation fiber/catheter is inserted inside the diseased vein and positioned to begin the ablation. Energy is delivered to the fiber/ catheter, which is slowly withdrawn through the vein. The heat gently destroys the lining of the vein.
- The small wounds are closed with steri-strips. Sterile compression dressings are applied.
- The procedure usually takes about an hour, depending on the severity of your disease and the amount of work required. You will, however, be at the Vein Center up to an hour or more before and after the procedure.

After You're Home:

- Leave the stocking in place until your ultrasound a few days after your procedure. If you have a blue wrap, it should be removed at bedtime the evening of your procedure.
- You need to frequently walk around the house and out of doors. **Please avoid sitting with your feet down or standing still for prolonged intervals.** We like you to walk around 3-5 minutes per hour, as this speeds recovery and helps to keep you from becoming too "stiff" or developing blood clots. Do not exercise enough to sweat profusely as this can increase chances of infection.
- Approximately 48 hours after your post-op ultrasound, you may shower (**no tub-baths**). Do not scrub the wounds. You can rub the legs lightly with your fingertips. Pat your legs dry when getting out of the shower, and then dry them completely with a hair-dryer on the "cool" setting. Leave the paper steri-strips on your wound (they will peel off in about 2 weeks). You may place a band-aid over the wounds if you wish.
- Starting postoperative day two or three (after the dressings are removed at the Vein Center), you should wear your stocking as much as you can for the next two weeks (daytime only).
- You may resume your exercise schedule within 2 weeks, again using common sense to adjust your schedule if your leg is still painful or tender. We recommend low impact exercise.
- There will be bruising, redness and tenderness in the areas that once contained varicose veins. Patients usually feel tender knots or bumps in the region the micro-phlebectomy or sclerotherapy has been performed (where the varicose veins had been). This

is a normal result of the procedure and is temporary. The bruising will not harm you, and is not the type of "blood clots" that can go to your lungs. They will slowly disappear as the veins dissolve away.

- Minor post operative "bleeding" is to be expected. Much of the "blood" is actually Lidocaine mixed with a little blood that has leaked from the puncture site. If the blood spot is bigger than a saucer, call the Vein Center.
- No long distance travel for more than 3 hours, 2 weeks post operative.
- You do have an increased risk of developing blood clots in the deep veins of your leg if you are immobile for an extended period. The following measures will decrease that risk considerably.

If you travel by car, airplane, etc. for longer than one hour for the next six (6) months, or are at bedrest for any reason please:

- 1) Wear your compression stockings while in transit.
 - 2) Walk around (in a parking lot, in the airplane aisle, etc.) for five minutes every hour.
 - 3) Stay well-hydrated.
 - 4) Move your feet frequently while seated.
- To decrease the chances of infection, you should avoid soaking in hot tubs or spas, etc. for at least 4 weeks after your operation. Swimming and tub baths are o.k. after 2 weeks.
 - You will have a follow-up office visit and postoperative ultrasound 3-5 days after your procedure.

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