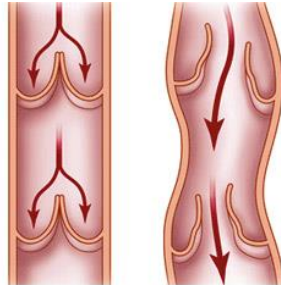




جامعة الإمام عبد الرحمن بن فيصل
IMAM ABDULRAHMAN BIN FAISAL UNIVERSITY

مستشفى الملك فهد الجامعي
King Fahad Hospital The University

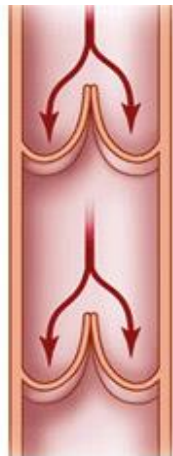
Varicose veins



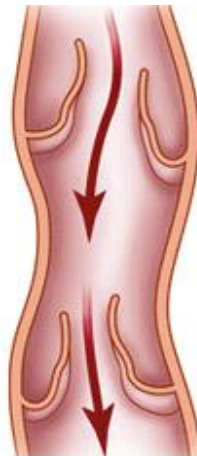
What is Varicose Veins?

It is the condition in which the veins are tortuous and enlarged and it might appear in all the veins of the body.

Leg veins are the most common, because of the long standing and long walking which increase pressure on the veins in the lower part of the body. Varicose veins are considered a cosmetic problem.



Normal Veins

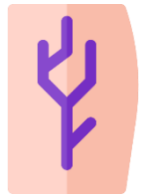


Varicose Veins

What are the symptoms of Varicose Veins?

Mostly, Varicose Veins does not cause any pain, However, below are the most common symptoms:

- Blue or dark purple veins
- Twisting and swollen veins
- Appearance of varicose veins in different places of the legs, starting from the thigh to the ankle



Another painful symptoms:

- Feeling of painful or heavy legs
- Muscle cramps and swelling in the lower legs
- Palpitations and burning
- Increasing pain after long sitting or standing
- Itching around one or more veins



Another painful symptoms:

- Occurrence of some skin ulcers in the area near the ankle which might indicate a serious disease in the blood vessels that requires medical treatment.



- Spider veins (similar to a spider's web) are similar to varicose veins, but they are distinguished by being:

- ❖ Smaller
- ❖ Closer to the skin
- ❖ It may be red or blue which may appear on the legs or face



What are the common causes of Varicose Veins?

- **Aging:** The veins lose their elasticity with age, becoming weaker and more stretchy.



This causes the blood to flow back instead of flowing to the heart, then it would be collected in the veins, which leads to their widening and thus the formation of varicose veins.



Varicose veins are blue due to the lack of oxygen in the blood recirculating through the lungs.

What are the common causes of Varicose Veins?

- **Pregnancy:** The volume of blood in the body increases during pregnancy in order to support the fetus, which reduces blood flow from the legs to the pelvis and thus causes an expansion in the veins of the legs. Sometimes varicose veins may form for the first time or they may worsen in late pregnancy when the pressure of the uterus increases on the veins in the legs. Hormone changes during pregnancy may also play a role in the formation of varicose veins, and usually varicose veins that appear during pregnancy improve without the need for medical intervention within three months after birth.



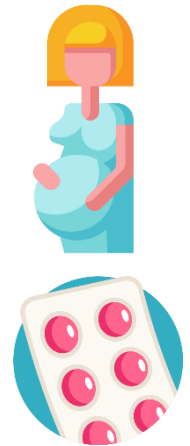
What are the common causes of Varicose Veins?

- **Age:** Varicose veins often occur in people between 30-70 years old, and with age increases the risk of developing them, as aging causes rupture of the vein valves, which leads to blood pooling in the veins instead of flowing to the heart.



What are reasons that increase the risk of developing varicose veins?

- **Gender:** Women are more likely to have varicose veins than men due to hormonal changes that relax the vein walls, such as:
 - Pregnancy
 - The premenstrual period
 - Menopause
 - Taking hormones or birth control pills



What are reasons that increase the risk of developing varicose veins?

- **Genetic factors:** the possibility of infection increases when a family member has it.



- **Obesity:** the more weight increases, the more pressure it creates on the veins.



- **Standing for long periods of time:** This reduces the efficiency of blood flow

What are the complications of varicose veins?

Complications from varicose veins are rare, such as ulcers and blood clots.



How is Varicose Veins diagnosed?

1. **Physical examination:** This can monitor the legs while standing, to notice any swelling.
2. **Ultrasound examination:** This examination is required to see whether the valves in the veins are functioning normally or if they contain a clot.



When performing the examination, it is necessary to:

- ✓ Lie on the bed
- ✓ Apply a small amount of gel to the skin to prevent the formation of air pockets between the transducer and the patient's body.
- ✓ A small hand tool (**transducer**) is pressed into the area to be examined and then moved from one area to another if necessary.
- ✓ An image of the leg veins appears on a screen that enables the doctor and specialist to view it.



How is Varicose Veins treated?

Treatment for varicose veins usually does not require hospitalization, but it requires some physical procedures, such as:

1. Self-care:

- Exercise
- Weight loss
- Avoid tight clothing
- Raise your legs
- Avoid standing or sitting for a long time



How is Varicose Veins treated?

2. Rubber Socks:

Wearing rubber socks is the first step in treating varicose veins before any other procedure.



Where these socks are worn throughout the day and are wrapped around the leg to form pressure on it, which helps blood flow in the veins and muscles of the legs more.

- There are many types of rubber socks available in pharmacies, making it easy for a person to get the right socks for him, depending on the desired degree of compression.



How is Varicose Veins treated?

Rubber Socks:

It is imperative to ensure that the socks are suitable for the legs when purchasing. The leg can also be measured with a tape measure to ensure that you are purchasing the correct size and socks must be sturdy but not too tight.



How is varicose veins treated?

If self-care or rubber socks didn't help in treating the varicose veins or if the condition is more severe, your doctor may recommend one of the following treatments:

- ❖ Laser surgery
- ❖ Catheter surgery
- ❖ Cutting the vein surgically, it may not require hospitality
- ❖ Treatment of varicose veins with sclerotherapy
- ❖ Masking veins



What are the prevention methods?

There is no way to completely prevent varicose veins. However, the risk of infection or proliferation may be reduced by improving circulation and tightening muscles, for example:

- Exercise



- Maintain a healthy weight



- Maintain a diet low in salt and rich in fiber



- Avoid high-heeled shoes and tight clothing or socks.



- Raise the legs and change the position of sitting or standing constantly.



Are there any alternative treatments for varicose veins?

Yes, [desert chestnut seed extract](#) may be effective in cases of chronic venous insufficiency, a disease associated with the appearance of varicose veins in which the veins are unable to pump blood to the heart.



However, before using herbal treatments or any other nutritional products, refer to your doctor first.



Sources and references

All pictures used are from Flaticon.com

Review and audit:

The content of this booklet has been reviewed by consultants of the
General Surgery department at King Fahad University Hospital

Health Awareness Unit

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