



Mr Gareth J M Tervit F.R.C.S
Consultant Vascular

TRADITIONAL VARICOSE VEIN OPERATION

1. Before your Operation.

If you are taking the oral contraceptive pill, it should be stopped one month before the operation. This is to reduce the risk of thrombosis. However, it is very important that you think about other contraceptive methods. The operation may be performed as a day-case, and this will be discussed with you at the clinic. However, sometimes when you are having both legs operated upon, or if you have any medical problems, you may be in the hospital for 2 nights.

2. Coming into Hospital.

You will come into hospital either the day before, or on the morning of, your operation and your surgeon will visit you before surgery to explain about the operation and to mark the position of the veins. The anaesthetist will also visit you before surgery, and if you have any specific worries about your anaesthetic, please ask.

3. After your operation.

Usually you will be allowed home either on the day of your operation or the next day. For the first week when sitting it is better if you elevate your legs with your heels at least as high as your hips. You should also take regular short walks. Slight discomfort is normal, but occasionally severe local twinges of pain may occur and may persist for some months. In the first week after the operation you may need to take a mild painkiller such as paracetamol to relieve discomfort. Try to avoid excessively long baths or showers for the first 2 - 3 days as the adhesive strips on your leg may come off, but after that you can bath or shower normally, taking care to dry well. You should wear an elastic support day and night for the first week, after which you may leave it off at night for a further week. You should avoid driving for about one week from the operation. When you feel comfortable, resume normal activity.



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4. Possible Complications.

Sometimes a little blood will ooze from the wounds during the first 12-24 hours. This usually stops on its own. If necessary, press on the wound for a few minutes. If bleeding continues, please contact me at one of the above telephone numbers, or phone your General Practitioner. Bruising, especially along the inner thigh is common in the first week or two after the operation. This need not be a cause for concern. However, if accompanied by excess swelling, redness and pain, there may be inflammation and you should contact either your surgeon or your General Practitioner. Numbness and/or pain sometimes occur in various places in the leg. These usually settle within a few months; rarely a small area of permanent numbness remains. It is very rare for any pain to persist. The scars on your legs will continue to fade for many months. Sometimes a deep vein thrombosis (DVT), a clot of blood in the deep veins of the leg or pelvis can develop after surgery. This can occur in up to 5% of patients after varicose vein operations, and may require treatment with blood-thinning drugs in some cases.

5. How good is the treatment?

New varicose veins may appear after treatment, and you will have been warned that not every visible vein will disappear as a result of your operation. The taking of regular exercise and the avoidance of becoming overweight are considered to be beneficial to your legs.