

VNUS RADIOFREQUENCY ABLATION FOR VARICOSE VEINS

PATIENT INFORMATION

You have been advised that your varicose veins are suitable for treatment with VNUS Closure.

Here is some information regarding the procedure and aftercare.

The Procedure

VNUS Closure is a treatment for varicose veins that seals the vein from the inside using heat from microwaves. It is performed under local anaesthetic on an outpatient basis. The whole episode usually takes about 90 minutes. Usually only one leg is treated at a time, although this can be discussed with your consultant.

Before the treatment, your leg will be scanned again by the consultant and some pen marks made on the leg.

In the procedure room, the leg is cleaned with antiseptic, and sterile drapes are applied. A small amount of extra local anaesthetic is injected, and a fine catheter (tube) is inserted through a tiny puncture into the varicose vein using ultrasound guidance. A further volume of local anaesthetic is then injected along the line of the varicose vein containing the catheter (this should be painless due to the earlier application of anaesthetic cream). The catheter is connected to a machine that heats the tip using microwaves, and this seals the vein from the inside as the catheter is slowly withdrawn.

There may be some additional small varicose veins which can be removed at the same time under local anaesthetic through tiny incisions, which are then closed with a paper strip. This will be discussed with your consultant before the procedure starts.

After the procedure, a full length stocking will be applied to the treated leg(s). You are then able to leave the procedure room. You can drive immediately from the hospital if you wish. If you have had any small veins removed at the same time, you will be asked to lie with your feet up for 30 minutes before leaving.

Progress after discharge

Most patients feel only minimal discomfort following VNUS Closure and 40% of patients do not require any painkillers at all. If you do wish to take something, simply take whatever you would use for a headache such as neurofen or paracetamol.

The stocking can be removed whenever you wish to shower, but put it back on straight afterwards. Ideally the stocking should not be removed at all for the first 36 – 48 hours after the procedure. You should plan to wear the stocking day and night for two weeks, removing it to shower.

So long as the stocking is worn there are no restrictions on exercise or activities following VNUS Closure.

However, you should not plan to fly for 2 weeks following treatment.

Warwickshire Vein Centre

If you have had any varicose veins removed through small incisions, the paper strips used to close the skin will usually drop off on their own. They can be peeled off after 5 days if they are still there.

The treated vein can sometimes be felt under the skin, like a cord. It may feel a little tight at first if you are exercising or stretching, but it softens up quite quickly and within a few weeks disappears altogether.

Complications following VNUS Closure

Studies have shown that VNUS Closure is a very safe and effective way of treating varicose veins. There is less bruising and discomfort compared to other methods of treatment. It is approved by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE).

If you have had veins removed through small incisions at the same time, these will leave small scars on the leg, which should be hardly noticeable.

In about 3% of patients, there may be some tenderness and slight lumpiness of treated veins (phlebitis). This will disappear over a few weeks.

Approximately 2% of patients may have some altered sensation of the skin due to heat damage of skin nerves. In most cases this will completely recover.

There is a rare incidence (less than 1%) of deep venous thrombosis following VNUS Closure.

Follow-up after VNUS Closure

You will normally be seen in the outpatient clinic by the consultant in the weeks following VNUS Closure. The consultant will examine your legs, and check on progress.

You will have the opportunity at review to ask your consultant any questions or discuss any aspect of your treatment.