



**University
Hospitals Sussex**
NHS Foundation Trust

Radiofrequency ablation treatment for varicose veins

Vascular

Patient information

What is this information about?

This information is about what to expect when you come to Lewes Victoria Hospital for an outpatient procedure called radiofrequency ablation for varicose veins.

It tells you:

- What this procedure is.
- What will happen before and after the procedure.
- Contact numbers to call should you need any further help.

Why have I been given this information?

You have been given this information because you, or a person you are looking after, will be having this procedure. Reading this advice will help you to prepare for what will happen. You will also know what to do to look after yourself once you get home.

Keep this information in a safe place so you can refer to it when you need to.

Be aware

You will not be able to drive after this procedure, so make sure you have transport to get you back home.

What is radiofrequency ablation?

Radiofrequency ablation is a treatment that uses gentle heat to close off veins in your leg. These are the veins that are not working properly and cause varicose veins.

Do I need to stop taking any of my usual medicines before the procedure?

You do not need to stop taking your usual medicines before this procedure. Carry on as normal.

Where does the procedure take place?

This is carried out in the Outpatients Treatment room.

This is an outpatient procedure, which means that you do not have to stay in hospital overnight.

What happens on the day of the procedure?

On the day of the procedure, eat a light lunch and continue drinking as normal.

- When you arrive at the hospital, a nurse will measure your leg or legs so that we can fit you with the correct size compression stockings for the end of the procedure. These stockings are important because they:
- Are part of the treatment for your varicose veins.
- Help to reduce the risk of a blood clot after your procedure.

You will then be seen by the surgeon to discuss the procedure and sign the consent form. If you are happy to go ahead, you will then change into a hospital gown.

What happens during the procedure?

During this procedure, the surgeon will give you a local anaesthetic injection in your leg. A local anaesthetic is a medicine which makes an area of your leg feel numb.

They will then make a small incision (cut) in your skin so that a catheter can be passed up inside your vein.

The surgeon uses an ultrasound scan to guide the catheter inside the vein. The tip of the catheter can be heated to block off the vein, and the surgeon then slowly removes the catheter. They stop and reheat the catheter tip every few centimetres until they have sealed off the part of the vein being treated.

You will have a dressing applied to the very small wound in your leg. The nurse will then put the compression stocking (or stockings) on your legs.

If you are not already taking blood-thinning medicine, your surgeon will give you a blood thinning injection at the end of the procedure.

How long does it take?

One leg usually takes about 30 minutes, both legs about an hour.

What happens after the procedure?

You will be asked to remain in a side room in the outpatient department for 15 to 20 minutes. You will be offered a drink. Before you leave the nurse will check your leg wound.

After this procedure you must not drive until the next day, so you will need to be collected from the hospital.

What should I do once I return home?

You must wear the compression stocking, or stockings, for 48 hours. After this, you can take them off so you can shower, remove the dressings, and put on clean stockings. You may have to wear them for up to 4 weeks. Your surgeon will tell you how long to wear them.

On the day after the procedure, you can return to normal activities, like driving and working.

It is important that you move about regularly to help prevent clots from developing. Moving will also help the vein inside your leg to heal without becoming rigid.

You can take painkillers such as paracetamol if you have any pain.

Can I travel by plane after this operation?

For short haul flights, you must wait for 4 weeks. For long haul flights, you must wait for 6 weeks.

Who can I contact for further information or advice?

You will be sent an appointment to see the Vascular Nurse Specialist at Lewes Victoria Hospital or an Outpatients Department nearer to where you live about 8 weeks after your procedure.

You can contact the Vascular Nurse Specialist Team if you have any questions or queries. Their numbers are:

Jason Clark 07920 286368

Abbey Gibbons 07770 498392

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