

# **Patient Information - Varicose Vein Repair**

**Varicose Vein Repair**

**Patient information leaflet**

**Critical Care Directorate - Mottingham Ward/Acer Unit**

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[www.dgt.nhs.uk](http://www.dgt.nhs.uk)

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## **About your operation**

Varicose veins is a condition where the superficial veins, especially in the legs become knotted, twisted and swollen. This is usually caused by a defect in the valves or circulation that normally moves the blood out of the legs when standing for long periods. The surgical procedure involves tying the veins above the faulty portion and stripping the veins below. This may

involve a groin incision; if necessary you may be asked to shave the appropriate side prior to admission. Sutures are usually absorbable and do not need to be removed.

### **Are there any alternatives to the operation?**

It is usually safe to leave varicose veins alone although problems may occur. Varicose veins will not disappear without surgery. Support stockings may often prevent the veins from getting worse and ease aching. However, surgery is the only dependable way to remove most varicose veins. Please speak to your doctor about any alternative treatments

### **What should I do before my operation?**

Now your Consultant has agreed with you to undergo this procedure, it is important to follow the advice on your admission letter and that given by the pre-admission assessment nurse. Your procedure may involve either a general or a local anaesthetic and you will be advised accordingly when to stop eating and drinking, and whether to stop or continue regular medication.

Please follow the pre-operative fasting instructions given by the pre-admission nurse specifically for day surgical procedures to aid recovery.

You should refrain from smoking and drinking alcohol for 48 hours prior to your operation.

## **What is a General Anaesthetic**

This is when you go to sleep for your operation. A small tube will be put into the back of your hand and through this the medicines are given to keep you asleep and pain free. Please ask your nurse for the anaesthetic information leaflet. Alternatively, the website below gives more information;  
[www.youranaesthetic.co.uk](http://www.youranaesthetic.co.uk)

### **What arrangements do I need to make after a General Anaesthetic?**

Even though you may feel quite normal, there is a period following a general anaesthetic in which your judgement, performance and reaction times are impaired. Therefore, it is important that a friend or relative must collect you

from either Mottingham Ward or Acer Unit and there must be someone to stay with you for the next 24 hours. If you are unable to provide a suitable carer, your operation may be postponed or cancelled.

You must not drive yourself home or travel by public transport. You should not drink alcohol, drive a car, ride a bicycle, use a cooker, operate machinery, sign legal documents or do anything potentially dangerous for 24 hours after the operation. Smoking may cause dizziness.

### **What do I need to bring with me to hospital on the day of operation?**

- Dressing Gown and slippers if you have any.
- Something to read.

Remove as much jewellery as possible and leave it at home. The Trust is not responsible for valuables. For health and safety reasons please remove any false nails, nail varnish and make up.

## **Relatives, Friends and Carers**

We request that all visitors leave the unit once the patient has been dropped off, unless there is a specific clinical need which needs to be identified to the nurses.

## **Pain Relief**

Please follow the pain relief advice leaflet given by your pre-operative assessment nurse. During your anaesthetic, you will be given pain-relieving medicines. After your operation, your nurse will give you more pain relief medication as necessary. Please ensure you have a stock of your regular painkillers at home.

# Risk of the operation

Like all operations there are risks and complications associated with varicose vein surgery. The main areas of risk are:

- Anaesthetic complications - please speak to the anaesthetist about this.
- It is common to get a lump under the skin caused by bleeding; this may last a few weeks
- Numbness or tingling around the small cuts in the leg, this may be permanent.
- It may not be possible to remove all varicose veins from the leg.
- Swelling of the leg if all the blood does not drain properly.

Please speak to your doctor before the operation about the risks involved

## **What do I have to do after the operation?**

The day following your operation you will need to see your Practice Nurse. This should be booked when you receive your date for surgery. The bandages on your legs will be removed. The paper strip dressings checked and replaced if necessary

Compression stockings will be applied to the affected leg. You are advised to wear this day and night for the first five days, thereafter wear them in the daytime only for the next 2 weeks. There is no need to worry if there is some slight oozing from the wounds under the stocking. The groin would commonly weep to some extent, but any serious infection is unusual. The legs can be soaked in a bath once all incisions are treated (usually 5-7 days).

## **Wound Management**

It is inevitable there will be bruising and hard lumpy areas under the skin of the leg where the veins have been removed. However, if any areas become hot, red, inflamed and very painful, then there is a possibility of developing an infection and you should arrange to see your GP as soon as possible.

# Follow Up

After 5 days, report back to your GP/Practice Nurse. Any remaining dressings and stitches will be removed if necessary.

## Activity Guidance

After varicose vein surgery, there is no need to rest and you should keep your legs moving. Time off work will depend on what work you do and you will be advised accordingly. It is best to either be exercising or sitting with your legs up. The worst position is sitting in a chair with your knees bent at 90°. You should gradually increase your exercise in stages, without going to extremes. The best exercise is walking. Once you are exercising normally, and have little or no discomfort there is no reason to restrict your activities in any way. It is perfectly reasonable to go back to work or drive. The only restriction is that the legs should be kept moving and should not remain in one position for long periods of time.

### Who do I contact if I have any problems?

If you are anxious about your condition, do not be afraid to ask for advice, however small your worry may seem. If you feel unwell, this could be the anaesthetic affecting you and your GP will be able to help you. If it is problems with circulation, numbness, coldness, colour changes, swelling or bleeding, please contact:

- If you were a patient on Acer, please telephone 01322 428267/8. Acer is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- If you were a patient at Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup, please telephone 0208 302 2678
- Telephone your GP or Practice Nurse.
- Telephone 111

We hope your stay with us was pleasant but if there were any problems please let the ward manager know.

**This leaflet has been developed in partnership with the Patient Information Group and our DGT Patient Partners**

## **Patient Information**

Further patient leaflets are available from the Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust website: <https://www.dgt.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patient-information-leaflets> Please ask a member of staff if you require information in another language or format.

## **Complaints, Comments, Concerns and Compliments**

Please speak to the staff in the ward or department caring for you if you have any concerns or questions relating to your care or that of a loved one.

Compliments can be shared by visiting: <https://www.dgt.nhs.uk/contact-us/compliments>

Alternatively, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01322 428382 Email: [dgn-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:dgn-tr.PALS@nhs.net)

## **Patient Property**

Please do not bring large sums of money or valuable items into the hospital. Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property unless it is handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust operate smoke-free hospitals. This means that smoking is not permitted anywhere on hospital grounds. For help to quit smoking please visit [www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/one-you-smokefree/](http://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/one-you-smokefree/)

Use of alcohol or illicit drugs is not permitted anywhere on the hospital site. For drug and alcohol support please speak to your nurse or doctor or

Visit: [www.changegrowlive.org/westkent/help](http://www.changegrowlive.org/westkent/help)

Call: 0330 128 1113

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