



# PATIENT INFORMATION: AMBULATORY PHLEBECTOMY

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Ambulatory phlebectomy is a procedure used to treat superficial varicose veins in the legs in a similar way to stripping



## 2 PROCEDURE

Your treating doctor will identify any large superficial veins that protrude out. Photographs may be taken before the treatment.

The patient usually lies on a bed and the skin is cleansed with either an alcohol swab or antiseptic solution. The identified varicose vein is marked with a skin marker. Local anaesthetic is applied to the skin and superficial tissues. A small stab incision is made approximately 1-2mm in size with a fine scalpel. The vein and its branches are hooked and teased out through this incision. The vein is then removed from the area. This is an effective way of removing veins that would bulge out despite injection therapy. Depending on the number of veins, often there are multiple phlebectomies performed. Each phlebectomy is best described as pulling out the veins. The procedure gives a very good cosmetic appearance when there are large bulging veins.



### 3 COMPRESSION STOCKINGS

The patient is asked to wear a grade 2 compression stocking immediately after the phlebectomy. This should either have been provided to you or you have brought it along prior to the treatment. The stockings are ideally worn for up to 7 days. It is important to walk around after procedure with the stockings on.

### 4 HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

Depending on the size of the veins, colour and number it can be variable. As a general rule it takes 3-6 weeks for wound to close and become less conspicuous. It can take longer for larger varicose veins to become less conspicuous.

### 5 WHAT CAN GO WRONG?

- Infection (< 5%) – this is reduced by intravenous antibiotics at the time of the procedure and for one week after the procedure.
- Bruising – usually settles within 2 to 3 weeks.
- Scarring – settles over 6 to 12 weeks. Depending on your skin type there is a small chance of keloid scarring (Silicon Scar Gels are helpful to minimize this).
- Pain – during and after treatment can last up to 1 week.
- Superficial thrombophlebitis – settles over 4-6 weeks with anti-inflammatories and stockings.
- Numbness – may occur in the treated area and in the distribution of the nerve affected. This may take some weeks or months to improve and in very rare instances may be permanent (rare – < 1%).
- Recurrence of veins – 5-20% at 5 years, this varies between patients.
- Deep Vein Thrombosis with potential Pulmonary Embolism – this occurs in less than 1% of cases.
- Swelling of treated legs – could be permanent in up to 5% of people. The cause of this is sometimes unknown.