

Varicose Veins

Information for patients

You're receiving this leaflet because you've seen your GP about varicose veins treatment and may have asked about surgery.

What are varicose veins?

Varicose veins are veins that have become swollen and twisted under the skin. They are usually found on your lower legs. They are a common problem affecting about 30 people in every 100. They are not usually serious, although they sometimes cause aching, swelling, or itching.

Treatment for varicose veins

Surgery for varicose veins is a very limited procedure which is only carried out in NHS Scotland in specific situations. Across all of NHS Scotland, GPs can only refer you to hospital for varicose vein surgery if you meet one of these criteria:







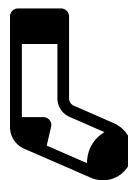
- Large areas of discoloured skin, varicose eczema or ulcers.
- Thrombophlebitis (when a blood clot causes inflammation) – which has been diagnosed by ultrasound or treated by heparin.
- Varicose veins that bleed.

Unfortunately, any referrals that don't meet one of these criteria will be returned and will not receive a hospital appointment.

NHS Lothian has been receiving a high number of referrals that don't meet these criteria and we appreciate your understanding as we manage access to this service.

There are things you can do to help your varicose veins. Please read on for more information.

What can I do to help my varicose veins?

	Don't smoke. Smoking damages your veins and makes varicose veins more likely.
	Try to keep a healthy weight. This helps prevent more varicose veins from developing.
	Move about regularly. Try to avoid sitting or standing still for long periods.
	When sitting, put your feet up if possible e.g. using cushions.
	Exercise regularly to help your blood flow e.g. walking.
	Use moisturiser if your skin is dry, flaky, or itchy.
	Ask your GP about using support tights or compression stockings.