

These are veins that are swollen, lengthened and obvious just below the skin.

### **What to look for**

- prominent dark blue veins, especially in the legs and feet.
- your legs may ache

Varicose veins are usually fairly obvious and bulge out from under your skin. They usually affect your legs. Varicose veins can be superficial or deep. Superficial veins are visible and swollen. They are painful and can affect your circulation but usually harmless.

Deep varicose veins can be the cause of blood clots and inflammation as they form deeper within the leg.

### **Causes**

People who suffer from varicose veins are thought to have defective valves in the leg. This is a result of too much blood pressure which makes the veins swell. The swollen veins then cause the valves not to seal properly. We rely on the valves to circulate the blood to the heart properly. If they do not function properly, the blood can't keep flowing and starts to pool in the vein causing the swollen veins that are part of this condition.

There are certain triggers that increase the likelihood of varicose veins.

- constipation
- pregnancy
- obesity
- too much standing
- injury

### **Traditional Treatment**

If you have a less severe case you do not need to see your doctor and can treat the condition at home. Support pantihose are usually very helpful and you should leave them on all day. They will support the veins in your legs.

Your doctor may suggest taking a pain killer for the pain of varicose veins. If you notice no signs of having this condition but still have the pain associated with it - call your doctor immediately.

There are numerous options available for this condition - ask your doctor to tell you about them.

### **Lifestyle**

Take up regular aerobic exercise - this is beneficial for circulation.

Take a hot bath followed by a cold bath to relieve the pain from varicose veins. You can also do the same thing with foot spas.

Yoga's stretching and relaxation techniques can be particularly beneficial for varicose veins.

### **Dietary Considerations**

To rid yourself of varicose veins and to prevent them from forming, it is wise to reorganise your diet to include lots of low fat foods and plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. A diet low in fat and high in fibre is best.

Drink plenty of filtered water as well. Also reduce the amount of salt, alcohol and cut out cigarettes totally. It is important to keep your weight at your ideal level as extra body fat puts strain on your legs and veins. Vitamins B, C and E are helpful. As is magnesium, zinc, calcium fluoride, rutin and bioflavonoids, lecithin, kelp and garlic.

### **Personal Care**

Take some rest if your routine requires that you remain for long periods of time on your feet. Try to avoid high heels as this can also aggravate the problem.

### **Prevention**

- Exercise regularly.

- Eat well. Drink plenty of water. Take supplements listed above.
- Rest often and do stretching exercises if you are on your feet a lot.
- If you smoke, quit.
- If you're pregnant, sleep on your left side rather than on your back to lessen the pressure on your pelvic muscles.

**When to seek further professional advice**

- the pain and swelling becomes extremely severe.
- you have red varicose veins.
- you cut a varicose vein - see a doctor immediately.