

Clarivein® Procedure to varicose veins

Procedure

The Clarivein® procedure is carried out in the outpatient treatment room. You will be asked to attend before the list starts so that you can complete any necessary paperwork, to sign the final consent form and to have the correct side and the veins marked. As the procedure is under a local anaesthetic you may eat and drink normally prior to the procedure. You will be asked to change into a gown and you should bring a dressing gown and slippers with you to walk to the treatment room.

On entering the treatment room you will have your details checked one last time and be asked to lie on the couch. Mr Dunning will finally check the vein to be treated using the ultrasound scanner. The leg will be cleaned using an antiseptic solution and the leg covered in disposable fabric drapes. A small amount of local anaesthetic is injected and then a special catheter is inserted via a needle into the vein to be treated. The catheter is passed up the leg to the groin and its position checked using an ultrasound machine. The Clarivein® catheter is then activated while it is pulled back down the length of the vein to be treated. The motorised handle rotates the catheter tip during pullback, creating vessel spasm to block forward flow and concentrate the targeted infusion of liquid sclerosant. The body heals by permanently scarring the length of the vein.

After a further injection of local anaesthetic, any marked varicose veins may be removed through tiny incisions using a small hook. The stab incisions are closed with paper steristrips and covered with a dressing. A compression stocking is then applied to the leg with a bandage over the top.

The procedure usually takes less than an hour, but it is advisable to allow another half hour for the effects of the anaesthetic to wear off before going home.

The following morning you may remove the bandages leaving the support stocking in place. The support stockings need to be worn for 48 hours continually day and night. They then need to be worn during the day only for a further 10 days.

At home

You should be able to perform normal activities after 48 hours. Before then you will feel more comfortable if you sit with your feet elevated on a stool. Take several small walks during the day to avoid stiffness of the muscles and joints. Slight discomfort is normal. Occasionally, severe local twinges of pain may occur in some patients and may persist for some months. In the first week after the operation you may need to take a mild painkiller such as paracetamol to relieve discomfort.

If you have adhesive steristrips you should not get your leg wet for the first seven days. Care will be needed when washing. You may remove the dressings and steristrips after one week. A good soak in the bath will make it easier.

Return to normal activity

You can return to work when you feel sufficiently well and comfortable, generally after a couple of days. If you have had a large number of veins removed it may be longer before you are able to undertake most normal activities. If you have a job that involves much standing and your varicose veins were particularly severe, you may need longer off work. Mr Dunning will advise you and provide a certificate prior to your discharge.

The scars on your legs will continue to fade for many months. Do not get the wounds burnt in the sun as this fixes the scar and may prevent fading. A dab of sunblock over the wounds will prevent this.

Complications

These include:

- Bleeding - many people will experience some bleeding from the small wounds, particularly if the varicose veins were large. Pressure applied to the bleeding will stop it on most occasions. You may wish to consider having some protection on your bed for the first night.
- Infection - this is rare, but if it does occur can be treated with antibiotics.
- Neuralgia - this is discomfort or pain usually caused by a nerve being caught in scar tissue around the treated vein. It may occur after a few days and resolves after a few weeks as the scarring becomes softer. Rarely it can be severe and need special neuralgia pain killers to treat it. This complication is rarer with Clarivein® than the endothermal techniques.
- DVT - rarely deep venous thrombosis can happen after this procedure.
- Recurrence - the procedure is 95% successful at two years. However you can develop new veins from different sources in the future.

Further information

Further information may be obtained from:

www.lincolnveinclinic.co.uk

<http://clarivein.eu/home/>

Information written by Mr P G Dunning,
Consultant Vascular Surgeon
Lincoln Vein Clinic

www.lincolnveinclinic.co.uk

01522 791456