

## **Varicose Veins**

Veins are thin-walled vessels through which the impure blood is carried back to the heart. They usually have valves which regular the flow of blood towards the heart. Varicose veins are a condition in which veins become enlarged, dilated or thickened.

Varicose veins can occur in any part of the body but generally appear on the legs. The veins of the legs are the largest in the body and they carry the blood from the lower extremities upwards towards the heart. The direction of circulation in these vessels is largely determined by gravity. Though there are no mechanical obstacles to blood-flow, it is usually the incompetence of the valve which leads to an increase in intravenous pressure.

Varicose veins have an unsightly appearance and can be dangerous. A blood clot within a large, greatly dilated vein may breakaway and move toward the heart and lungs, causing serious complications. Varicose veins are about thrice as common as occurrence in women as in men. This disease is rare in rural undeveloped societies.

### **Symptoms**

The first sign of varicose veins is a swelling along the course of the veins. This may be followed by muscular cramps and a feeling of tiredness in the legs behind he knees. In some cases, the normal flow of blood towards the heart may be reversed when the patient is in an upright position. This results in venous blood collecting in the lower part of the legs and the skin becomes purplish and pigmented, leading to what is known as varicose eczema or varicose ulcers. Both conditions cause severe pain.

### **Treatment**

For a proper treatment of varicose veins, the patients should, in the beginning, be put on a juice fast for four or five days or on all-fruit diet for 7 to 10 days. A warm water enema should be administered daily during this period to cleanse the bowels and measures should be taken to avoid constipation.

After the juice fast or all the fruits- diet, the patient should adopt restricted diet plan. In this regimen, oranges or orange and lemon juice may be taken for breakfast. The midday meal may consist of a raw salad or any of the vegetables in the season with olive oil and lemon juice dressing. Steamed vegetables such as spinach, cabbage, carrots, turnips, cauliflower and raisins, figs or dates may be taken in the evening. No bread or potatoes or other starchy food should be included in this diet, or otherwise the whole effect of the diet will be lost.

After the restricted diet, the patient may gradually embark upon a well-balanced diet with emphasis on grains, seeds, nuts, vegetables and fruits. About 75 per cent of the diet should consist of raw vegetables and fruits. All condiments, alcoholic drinks, coffee, strong tea, white flour products, white sugar, and white sugar products should be strictly avoided. A short fast or

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the all-fruit diet for two or three days may be undertaken every month, depending on the progress.

Certain nutrients, especially vitamin E and C have also been found effective in the treatment of this disease. The patient should take vitamin C in a therapeutic dose upto 3,000 mg. and Vitamin E in therapeutic doses from 600 to 1200 I.U. daily. This will relieve him of pain and leg cramps associated with varicose veins.

The alternate hot and cold hip bath is very valuable and should be taken daily. The affected parts should be sprayed with cold water or cold packs should be applied to them. A mud pack may be applied at night and allowed to remain until morning. A hot Epsom-salt bath is also very valuable and should be taken twice a week. Raw vegetables juices, especially carrot juice in combination with spinach juice, have proved highly beneficial in the treatment of varicose veins. The formula proportion considered helpful in this combination are carrot 300 ml. and spinach 200 ml to prepare 500 ml of juice.

### **Precautionary Measures:**

The following precautionary measures will help prevent varicose veins and ease symptoms if the disease has already developed :

1. When on a long plane or train trip get up and walk around every half an hour. If on a long trip by car, stop once in a while and get out to stretch your legs.
2. When you are reading or watching television, elevate your feet and rest your legs on a chair or stool.
3. Mobility helps general circulation. Walking is beneficial as the movements of leg muscles help push the blood upwards. Swimming or walking in deep water does much the same thing. The great pressure of the water against legs helps move the blood up the veins and protects against stagnation.
4. Sleeping with feet raised slightly above the level of the heart helps the blood flow away from ankles. In case of serious troubles with varicose veins, the bed should be raised by placing blocks of six inches height under the posts at the foot. This is, however, not advisable for person with heart trouble.
5. If confined to bed, movement of feet and legs should be encouraged to help keep circulation moving youthfully.
6. Round garters should never be worn. They cut off the venous circulation, thus raising pressure in the veins and increasing the risk of varicositis.
7. Elastic girdles should not be worn continuously , especially when seated for a long time, such as at a desk, or during a plane, train or auto trip. The girdles bunch up and hamper the return flow of blood.

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8. Pregnant woman should wear elastic stockings and lie down occasionally during the day. Getting up soon after delivery is also helpful in blood circulation.

These easy-to-follow flex-exercises are beneficial as they ease the cause of varicose veins and thereby relieve the resultant symptoms. Sun bathing and deep breathing exercises are also helpful.

Certain inverted yoga postures such as viparitakarni, sarvagasana, and shirshashana are beneficial in the treatment of varicose veins as they drain the blood from the legs and reduce pressure on the veins. They help to relax the muscles and allow the blood freely in and out of the lower extremities. Padmasana, gomukhasana, vajrasana and shalabhasana are also beneficial.

### **Reference**

Shri H.K. Bakhrui. (1999). Natures Cure.

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