

During Treatment

Local anaesthetic is given at the access site as well as along the path of the vein to be treated. This additional local anaesthetic will reduce the discomfort from the heat generated by the laser.

The vein will then be accessed and a coil is placed via an ultrafine catheter into the upper end of the vein to be treated.

These coils are used to ligate the leaking vein and are similar to surgical clips used in other parts of the body.

The use of the coils provides more comprehensive treatment of the leaking vein by physically blocking the vein and thus reducing the risk of recurrence.

The sclerosing agent Aethoxysclerol is then injected via the catheter to ensure there is no leakage around the coil.

Under ultrasound guidance the tip of the laser fibre is positioned at the top of the vein and is activated. The fibre is slowly drawn down the vein with the heat destroying the vein as it passes.

After Treatment

Following your laser procedure you will be asked to walk for up to half an hour. You will be sent home in bandages with instructions for care. Bandages are generally worn overnight and replaced after showering the next day.

A follow up ultrasound will be organised to check for any evidence of deep vein thrombosis.

You will not need to wear compression stockings following treatment with laser.

Regular activities can be resumed immediately.

You may fly interstate after 24 hours and overseas after 10 days.

Ongoing recovery

Following treatment with laser the body will slowly reabsorb the lasered vein through an inflammatory process. It is normal to expect:

- Bruising from the local anaesthetic along the vein length
- Signs of inflammation such as redness, heat, swelling and pain/tenderness. This can be managed by staying active and anti inflammatory medication or panadol. Pain can last a few weeks and will slowly resolve.
- Tender lumps along treated vein are normal and indicate that the vein is slowly being reabsorbed. Occasionally these may require a quick needle stick to relieve pain produced by high pressure trapped blood.
- Staining of the leg along the line of the vein will occur as the iron component of the blood is slow to be reabsorbed by the body. This will slowly fade over time with a final result for most people within 12 months.

Information on Laser Ablation

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Which Varicose Veins are Suitable for treatment?

Laser devices now offer much less discomfort post procedure than surgery. However Laser technology is not as suitable as other techniques for recurrent varicose veins. Suitability for Laser treatment is determined in consultation with specialist vascular ultrasound scanning.

Large varicose veins and veins caused by incompetent valves in the main surface veins are suitable for laser ablation, ultrasound guided sclerotherapy coil embolisation and surgery.

Laser treatment is only useful for the main surface vein (called the long saphenous vein) and is not useful for lumpy, surface veins on the lower limbs which would still be best managed by surgery.

What are the advantages of Laser Ablation?

- Short procedure time (approximately 1hr)
- Walk in walk out procedure
- No hospital admission
- No general anesthesia
- Return to normal activity the following day
- No scarring from surgical incisions

What is Laser Ablation?

To treat larger varicose veins on a more permanent basis heat from a specifically designed Laser destroys the defective veins and is as effective as surgery in achieving elimination of varices. Laser technology has been used over the last 10 years with increasing safety and effectiveness.

What are possible Side Effects?

Pain: Pain can occur, on injection, in the form of a stinging sensation.

Migraine: Including visual disturbance and weakness may occur particularly in people predisposed to migraine. This can be treated with aspirin and resolves quickly.

Cough: Cough / tightness in the chest may occur and resolves in 15-30 minutes.

Fainting: Fainting at the sight of a needle, or from the agent itself. If severe will be treated with an injection of Atropine which stabilizes your blood pressure and heart rate.

“Now you can be treated without a hospital stay with a shorter discomfort period and earlier return to normal activity”

Prior to Treatment

There are no special requirements beforehand except that you should wear warm clothes loose enough to go over the legs after the application of bandages.

Warmth is helpful in dilating the veins so over dress or walk briskly before your visit.

It is important to note that Coils will be used during Laser treatment. Please ensure you read and understand the Coil Ligation information.

