

Alabama Vein Center

ENDOVENOUS SAPHENOUS VEIN ABLATION

WITH 1320 PULSED WAVE LASER

POSTOPERATIVE PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS

After the operation:

1. You will be taken from the operating theater into one of the examination rooms where you will meet with your family. You will be awake but will be quite sleepy in most instances. We will provide for you crackers and a soft drink to help you with your recovery. If you feel a little nauseated or uncomfortable in any manner, please notify our nursing staff right away so that we can help you.
2. After you leave the vein center, you may travel home and will likely rest comfortably. If you are not nauseated, you may drink and eat a little food by means of a drive-thru restaurant. Please do not try to walk into a restaurant as you may faint or have difficulty walking due to your sedation.
3. You may travel quite long distances in your car to return home. We recommend no further than between 3 hours to 5 hours, stopping to move around a little bit and perhaps eat a little food before reaching home. If you live quite a long distance, you may wish to remain in a nearby motel. We have special arrangements and rates for a nearby Marriott Courtyard Hotel approximately one mile from our Birmingham vein center. Similar arrangements have been made with the Tuscaloosa Marriott Courtyard should you travel a long distance to that facility.
4. Please feel comfortable to rest and relax on the day of your operation. Your leg is wrapped to provide firm compression so that you do not need to elevate your leg except for specific situations.
5. We recommend that you do not walk or put heavy weight on the treated leg on the day of surgery. You may touch your foot to the floor for balance and may place a small amount of weight. Using a crutch or a walker or similar support is often helpful.
6. On the day after surgery, you may walk on your treated leg in a normal manner. Your leg will be tender, but no harm can be caused by your walking.
7. After 24 hours you may remove the dressings at home. You may also then take a shower if you wish. If you have small paper steri-strips on phlebectomy sites, you may leave those alone because they will either begin to fall off after 7 to 10 days or we will remove them when you return to our clinic.
8. Once your bandages have been removed, we recommend you then put on your thigh high compression stocking. We also recommend that you wear these stockings during the daytime for the next two weeks. Compression hose will keep the treated veins in a collapsed state and allow more rapid healing. Often you will not have as much bruising or discomfort if you wear the compression stocking.
9. You may walk and be as active as is comfortable for you. We do not recommend vigorous exercise for one week, after which you may resume some type of limited exercise if that is your routine. You will find some discomfort in your leg while trying to exercise. We recommend you do not force the exercise program but do as much as you can and what you wish to do as long as you do not have pain.

10. The inside of your thigh, and/or the back of your calf, may become red and tender during the first 2 weeks after surgery. The second week is often more intense than the first. This is the body's normal inflammatory response to the successfully closed vein.
11. Postoperative pain is usually quite minor. If possible, please be sure to take Ibuprofen 400 mg to 600 mg two times to three times a day for at least one to two weeks. If your leg continues to bother you, please stay on the Ibuprofen until you no longer are having discomfort. You may also apply an ice pack in the morning and heat compression in the evenings. Ice will help control the inflammatory reaction and heat will help the vein begin to dissolve away more rapidly. Most importantly, taking some type of anti-inflammatory medication will be very beneficial.
12. Once you have resumed a normal diet which is often the day after your procedure, you may then resume all normal medications.
13. You will note that your leg and foot will swell somewhat for the next couple of months. Usually two months to four months are required during the healing process before swelling tends to diminish.
14. You may develop painful lumps which are clotted varicose veins or blood which has collected under the skin. These lumps will become red and tender and are often a concern to our patients. These changes are also normal and are a good sign of a successful treatment. These lumps will completely disappear over the next couple of months.
15. Please avoid soaking in hot tubs or spas for at least two weeks after surgery.
16. Skin numbness is a fairly common postoperative occurrence, noted on the inside of the thigh, sometimes on the front of the calf, and sometimes all the way down to the foot. Skin numbness is a minor problem due to close proximity of the origins of some of the skin nerves to the treated vein. The temperature of the laser being used to close the vein in some ways will irritate the small skin nerves. In almost every case, the nerves tend to reawaken or simply grow back. Return of skin sensation most often occurs at least within one year. These nerves have no motor function and therefore are simply an annoyance due to the numb feeling at certain spots.
17. Although your leg vein circulation has been corrected and restored to normal, we still recommend that you wear compression stockings when you travel distances longer than two hours. If you travel by airplane, wearing compression stockings are particularly helpful to prevent you from developing leg vein blood clots.
18. Before you are discharged home, you will be given an appointment to return for a follow up examination as well as an ultrasound evaluation. This is to make sure you are recovering in a normal fashion.
19. After you go home, please feel free to call our doctor on his cellular telephone, if you have any concern. Most of the time of you will be answered directly, if not your call will be returned in a very short time.

Alabama Vein Center	(205)823-0151
Tuscaloosa, Alabama office	(205) 561-5362
Prattville, Alabama office	(334) 819-5164
Toll Free Phone Number	(877) 268-VEIN
Dr. Hunt (Cell Phone)	(901) 482-9739
Sylvia Eldridge, PA-C	(205) 515-7182

Vein Treatment and Surgery: common questions and answers

1. **Who is performing the surgery and treatment?** Our doctors always perform the major procedures to correct leg vein abnormalities. Each doctor is board certified in his or her specialty and each is trained specifically to perform modern vein treatments. Our physician assistant and nursing staff are all expert to assist and to help perform many of the minor procedures as well.
2. **Are the procedures painful?** Our patients are provided “conscious sedation”, which means you will rest comfortably during the major vein procedures, you will not have pain.
3. **What are the names of the operations performed?** Endovenous laser ablation of the incompetent saphenous veins = laser energy treatment to close the leaking vein on a permanent basis. Micro-phlebectomy is the removal of large bulging ropy veins through very small micro-punctures in the skin. Sclerotherapy is the injection of small spider veins with a very safe and sophisticated sclerosant solution. The needles used are very small. The procedures are most often performed at the same time during your sedation.
4. **Where does the blood flow go if these veins are removed?** Our legs have numerous veins which “take up the slack” to allow normal blood flow. The nearby muscle veins accommodate the extra flow, and these veins are normal. Therefore the congestion is relieved and the vein circulation is restored back to normal.
5. **Does bleeding occur during the procedures?** During most of the procedures, there are no incisions. The laser fiber is inserted through a catheter which is positioned with only a needle stick. Large veins are removed through very small micro-punctures. Vein pressure is very low and bleeding is not common.
6. **What if I am on a “blood thinner”?** Most of the time you may continue the anti-coagulation, even Coumadin. The laser energy used is very effective to close veins even if your blood has been anti-coagulated. Your doctor will advise you regarding your blood thinner and surgery.
7. **May I eat after surgery?** The sedation will metabolize and go away fairly quickly, and you may eat normal food as soon as you feel awake and alert.
8. **May I walk, run, swim, and drive? And when?** The only day of recommended rest is the surgery day. You may walk gently, taking care to avoid pressing weight on the surgery leg. The second day, you may walk in a normal fashion. We recommend that you wait a full 48 hours, after anesthesia or taking pain medicine, before operating a car or heavy machinery. We like for you to restrict vigorous activity for about 2 weeks while your treated vein heals. You may shower the day after surgery. Please wait two weeks before taking a tub bath, or getting in a swimming pool or hot tub.
9. **What about the dressings and the compression stockings?** Try to leave the dressings with ace wrap in place the day of surgery. The next morning, the wrap can be removed and the stockings placed on the leg treated. We recommend the stockings be worn for two weeks.
10. **When can I return to work?** The day after your procedure is possible for many patients, depending upon your job and your need to work, but taking two days off is more common.