

Endovenous Ablation for Varicose Veins: Before Your Procedure

What is endovenous ablation?

Endovenous ablation is a procedure to close off varicose veins. Endovenous means that the procedure is done inside the vein. Ablation means a doctor uses heat to damage and close off the vein. Varicose veins are twisted, enlarged veins near the surface of the skin.

Your doctor will put a needle and wire into the vein. A thin tube (catheter) is placed over the wire and moved into the vein. Your doctor will use the catheter and special tools to send energy into the vein. The energy damages the tissue inside the vein. The energy and heat come from a laser or from radio waves called radiofrequency energy.

The procedure is usually done in your doctor's office. You may wear some type of eye protection. You'll be given medicine so you will not feel anything or you will feel relaxed. The procedure takes less than 1 hour.

After this treatment, you may have a few bruises along the length of the treated vein. Your doctor may put a bandage on the area.

Most people go home the same day of the procedure. You can do your usual activities, but avoid vigorous exercise for about 1 week. You will need to wear compression stockings for 1 week or more.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

What happens before the procedure?

Procedures can be stressful. This information will help you understand what you can expect. And it will help you safely prepare for your procedure.

Preparing for the procedure

- Understand exactly what procedure is planned, along with the risks, benefits, and other options.
- Tell your doctors ALL the medicines, vitamins, supplements, and herbal remedies you take. Some of these can increase the risk of bleeding or interact with anesthesia.
- If you take blood thinners, such as warfarin (Coumadin), clopidogrel (Plavix), or aspirin, be sure to talk to your doctor. He or she will tell you if you should stop taking these medicines before your procedure. Make sure that you understand exactly what your doctor wants you to do.
- Your doctor will tell you which medicines to take or stop before your procedure. You may need to stop taking certain medicines a week or more before the procedure. So talk to your doctor as soon as you can.
- If you have an advance directive, let your doctor know. It may include a living will and a durable power of attorney for health care. Bring a copy to the hospital. If you don't have

one, you may want to prepare one. It lets your doctor and loved ones know your health care wishes. Doctors advise that everyone prepare these papers before any type of surgery or procedure.

What happens on the day of the procedure?

- Follow the instructions exactly about when to stop eating and drinking. If you don't, your procedure may be canceled. If your doctor told you to take your medicines on the day of the procedure, take them with only a sip of water.
- Take a bath or shower before you come in for your procedure. Do not apply lotions, perfumes, deodorants, or nail polish.
- Do not shave the surgical site yourself.
- Take off all jewelry and piercings. And take out contact lenses, if you wear them.

At the doctor's office

- Bring a picture ID.
- You will be kept comfortable and safe by your anesthesia provider. You may get medicine that relaxes you or puts you in a light sleep. The area being worked on will be numb.
- The procedure will take less than 1 hour.

Going home

- Be sure you have someone to drive you home. Anesthesia and pain medicine make it unsafe for you to drive.
- You will be given more specific instructions about recovering from your procedure. They will cover things like diet, wound care, follow-up care, driving, and getting back to your normal routine.

When should you call your doctor?

- You have questions or concerns.
- You don't understand how to prepare for your procedure.
- You become ill before the procedure (such as fever, flu, or a cold).
- You need to reschedule or have changed your mind about having the procedure.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://www.healthwise.net/ed>

Enter **B900** in the search box to learn more about "**Endovenous Ablation for Varicose Veins: Before Your Procedure.**"

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