



leg vein problems

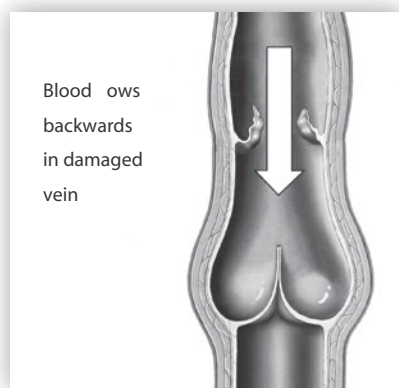


Leg vein problems (venous disorders) are a common occurrence caused by valves in the blood vessels which no longer close properly. Such problems may result in swelling near the ankles and calves, enlarged and/or varicose veins as well as tired and achy legs.

Effective treatment may be offered through Compression Therapy - wearing socks or stockings that are specially designed to support your veins and increase circulation in your legs. The socks or stockings are normally worn in the morning upon arising and removed at night. Throughout the day, the compression they provide prevents blood from pooling in leg veins, thereby helping overall circulation.

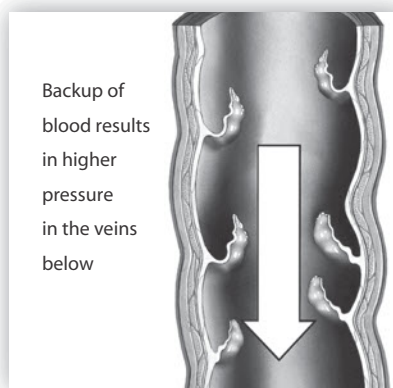
PROBLEMS How They Can Occur

Problems occur when a valve no longer closes properly. Weak or damaged valves cannot support the blood when the muscle relaxes. This allows blood to flow backwards in the vein, creating pressure on the valves below. These valves can also weaken. Blood flow back to the heart is reduced and other complications can develop.



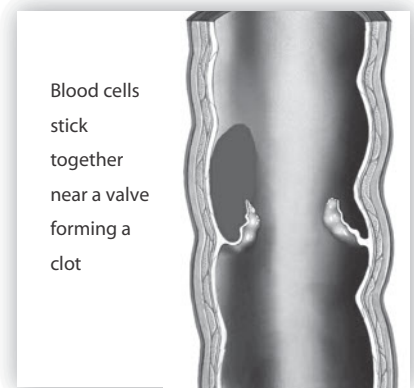
Pooling

A damaged or poorly closing valve in a vein of the leg allows blood to flow backwards. This can cause blood to back up and collect in the veins of the lower leg. Pooling of blood in the veins of the lower leg causes swelling, especially near the ankles and calves.



Enlarged Veins

When a valve is damaged or missing, the backup of blood results in higher pressure in the veins below. This higher pressure especially affects the superficial veins and may strain the walls of the vein, causing them to enlarge and even twist. As the veins enlarge, the valves within them can no longer close correctly. Enlarged superficial veins are visible bulges under the skin of the leg. These are also calledropy veins.



Blood Clots

The blood cells stick together near a valve, forming a clot. Clots in the deep veins are the most serious (called deep vein thrombosis or DVT). Part of a DVT may break loose and lodge in the lungs and may also cause long-term problems in the veins of the leg. Slow moving or poorly flowing blood in the veins is more likely to clot. The clot may completely or partially block the flow of blood through the vein.

CAUSES & RISK FACTORS

- Heredity
- Lack of exercise
- Advancing age
- Tightly fitting clothing
- Wearing high-heeled shoes
- Obesity
- Alcohol consumption
- During flight
- Hot baths and excessive exposure to the sun
- Dehydration
- Pregnancy

DISORDERS



Chronic Venous Insufficiency (CVI) - Results from damaged valves in the veins, causing blood to pool in the leg which leads to swelling and discomfort.

Swelling (edema) - Occurs due to buildup of fluid in the body's tissues, often in the lower leg and ankle.

Varicose Veins - Can be mild or severe. They are caused from a back flow or pooling of blood in a damaged vein. They may also occur as a result of heredity or develop during pregnancy.

Venous Ulcers - The chronic backup of blood due to damaged valves allows blood to pool in the lower leg, causing swelling. Chronic swelling interferes with the nutrition and oxygen supply to the skin. The skin becomes dry, flaky and darker in colour. The skin is fragile and easily breaks with minor trauma, forming an open wound which is slow to heal.

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) - A DVT is a blood clot (thrombosis) that forms in a deep vein, partially or completely blocking the flow of blood.

SOLUTIONS



Elevate Feet And Legs - When resting, elevate your feet above your heart. When sitting, rest your feet on a stool. Avoid crossing your legs.

Exercise Daily - (Always check with your doctor before starting an exercise program). Start a daily regimen of walking, swimming or other aerobic exercises. When sitting or standing, exercise your legs. Wiggle your toes, flex your feet or tighten your calf muscles to improve blood flow.

Use Flight Hose - Travellers who pull on a pair of compression hose before boarding long flights can cut their risk of blood clots.

Use Gradient Compression Therapy Daily - Gradient compression applies a measured amount of compression to your leg as the basis for management of venous conditions. Gradient compression stockings apply the highest amount of pressure at the ankle and gradually decreases up the length of the stocking. This helps the blood in your veins to flow in the right direction back toward your heart even if your veins and valves are damaged.

Medical gradient compression stockings come in four different compression levels as well as different stockings lengths depending on the location of the damage to your veins. Your Pedorthist can assist you with the compression level recommended by your doctor. In addition, there is a style designed specifically for pregnant women.

Please visit www.bioped.com for a list of all centres across Canada

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