

In some cases, part of the vein may become tender and swollen and you may be able to feel a lump. This is known as thrombophlebitis and can usually be managed by taking a painkiller and keeping mobile. If your skin feels warm/hot, looks red/angry, the redness seems to be spreading and you have a fever (high temperature), you may have an infection. Infections can develop between 3 days and 2–3 weeks after surgery. If you think you may have an infection, you should contact your doctor.

### Healing

Newer treatments are delivered through tiny incisions. A little local anaesthetic or blood may leak out through these incisions in the first 12 hours after surgery. The incisions usually heal very well and disappear over a period of several months. If ligation and stripping was used and you have stitches, they may dissolve on their own or your practice nurse may take them out 7–14 days after surgery. If your wounds keep bleeding, lie down and lift the leg above the heart or apply pressure over the area. The bleeding should stop within 15 minutes.

Bruising is often just under the surface and disappears within a couple of weeks. Stripping and ligation causes more extensive bruising that takes longer to heal.



If you have a venous leg ulcer and have had successful surgery, the ulcer should completely heal 4–5 months after the veins have been treated.

### When should I seek help or advice?

- If you experience severe pain
- If your wounds keep bleeding after the leg has been elevated or pressure applied for 15 minutes, or bleeding restarts on standing
- If you experience sudden significant swelling of the lower leg/thigh along with a heavy ache/generalised pain or tenderness (symptoms of DVT)
- If a patch of skin becomes hot and red, and the patch gets bigger (signs of cellulitis infection)



*Endovenous surgery for varicose veins under local anaesthetic*

After venous surgery, ensure you:

- Wear compression stockings for the recommended period of time
- Exercise regularly – walking is the best exercise for veins
- Avoid standing still for long periods, although combining standing with walking or ‘toe up and down’ exercises is acceptable. If you have to stand for long periods, wear compression stockings
- Elevate your legs when resting

### If you have any concerns please contact

Hospital .....

Outpatients .....

Clinical nurse specialist .....

GP Surgery .....

# What Should I Expect Following Venous Surgery?

To find out whether you have a Leg Club near you, or for any further information about Leg Clubs or the Leg Club model, contact [lynn.bullock@legclubfoundation.com](mailto:lynn.bullock@legclubfoundation.com) [www.legclub.org](http://www.legclub.org)



Written by the International Patient & Carer Advocacy Panel, a wound care initiative supported by the World Union of Wound Healing Societies and the Lindsay Leg Club Foundation.

The Leg Club title, wording and logo are protected by registered trademark in the UK. Registered Charity No. 1111259 [www.legclub.org](http://www.legclub.org)

The Leg Club Foundation is proud to be a member of the Legs Matters coalition [www.legsmatter.org](http://www.legsmatter.org)

Designed by Boothman Design [www.boothmandesign.com](http://www.boothmandesign.com)



## What should I expect following venous surgery?

You can usually go home on the same day as your venous surgery. The amount of time it takes to recover depends on how many veins your venous surgeon (phlebologist) treated and the type of treatment you received, see Table 3. Following newer techniques, if there are no complications you should be able to perform relatively normal activities and return to work the next day. It takes up to 3 weeks to recover after ligation and stripping surgery.

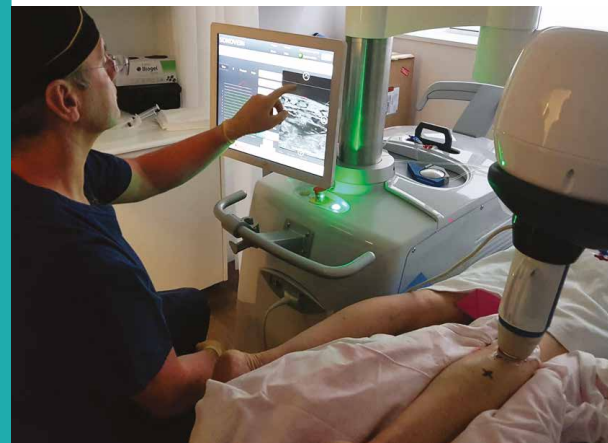
**Table 1. Newer and older treatments**

Newer treatments	Older treatment
Endovenous laser/thermal ablation	Ligation and stripping
Endovenous radiofrequency ablation	
Ultrasound-guided foam sclerotherapy	
Mechanochemical ablation (ClariVein™)	
Medical glue (cyanoacrylate) occlusion	
TRansLuminal Occlusion of Perforators (TRLOP)	
Endovenous microwave ablation	
Echotherapy (Sonovein®)	

## What should I do after treatment?

### Get moving

It is important to get the blood flowing through your legs as soon as possible after surgery to aid recovery and reduce the chance of developing complications. The best way to do this is through regular walking. Although your legs may feel a little uncomfortable for a few days, you should feel little or no pain when walking around. Walking reduces the risk of deep vein thrombosis (DVT); you have a higher chance of developing DVT if you have had a general anaesthetic or remain in bed or a chair after surgery. DVT is very rare after modern endovenous surgery, although still more common with open 'stripping' surgery under general anaesthetic.



HIFU Sonovein non-invasive treatment of varicose veins

### Use compression as instructed

You will probably be advised to use compression therapy after your venous surgery. The length and type of compression will depend on the type of surgery you have received and the veins that were treated. If you have had foam sclerotherapy, you will be advised to wear compression for 7–21 days if veins near the surface were treated (the results are better if you wear compression for closer to 21 days) and 3–7 days if deeper veins were treated.



### What should I expect during recovery and healing?

#### Discomfort/pain

Once the local anaesthetic has worn off, you may feel a little discomfort. Depending on which technique has been used, and if you had the surface varicose veins removed, your leg(s) may be covered with bandages or stockings for the first 24–48 hours to reduce discomfort and bruising. Pain in the first 12–72 hours after surgery is almost always due to the bandage or compression stocking being too tight. It can generally be managed by:

- Reducing the level of compression, ie cutting or loosening the bandages
- Taking an anti-inflammatory painkiller, eg ibuprofen, or – if you have stomach problems, an allergy to anti-inflammatory drugs or any lung problems – paracetamol for a few days.

You should contact your doctor or clinic during office hours to check whether your compression therapy needs to be changed if:

- It is rubbing behind the knee
- It is rubbing over the Achilles tendon
- It is covering a leg ulcer and the pain is stopping you sleeping or standing
- If your leg ulcer is producing excessive fluid
- The rubber hold-up area of your stocking is irritating the skin of your thigh.

You are more likely to experience pain if you have undergone ligation and stripping, as this requires bigger incisions that need stitches and causes more bruising. With newer techniques, you may feel some discomfort as the veins die away after treatment. This pain/discomfort may last a few weeks.

