

Varicose Vein Procedure Instructions

This brochure will provide information and instructions about the following varicose vein procedure.

- Endovenous laser ablation (EVLA)
- Microphlebectomy (MP)
- Ultrasound-guided foam sclerotherapy (USGFS)

*If you have
any questions,
please ask
your physician
or nurse.*

Before the procedure

Insurance approval

Insurance coverage for varicose vein procedures differs with each insurance company. Most insurance companies require that you try conservative treatment first. This includes:

- Wearing compression hose or stockings
- Exercising
- Using over-the-counter medication for pain
- Avoiding long periods of standing

After trying these options, you will be re-evaluated in the office. If your symptoms do not get better, we will send a letter to your insurance company asking for pre-approval for the procedure as medically necessary.

After we have received approval from your insurance company stating that it agrees the procedure is needed for medical reasons, the Vein Center patient liaison will contact you to schedule your procedure.

If you have any questions or concerns about insurance or procedure scheduling, you can contact the Vein Center patient liaison by phone at 312.695.4684, fax at 312.695.4620 or sending them a message through MyNM. You may access MyNM through the MyNM® app or log in at nm.org/mynm.

Medication

If you are taking any anticoagulant (blood thinner) medication such as aspirin, warfarin (Coumadin®), rivaroxaban (Xarelto®), apixaban (Eliquis®), enoxaparin sodium (Lovenox®) or clopidogrel (Plavix®), please tell the nurse or physician. These medications may need to be stopped before the procedure by the physician who prescribed them. You may take all of your other regular medication as directed.

Alprazolam (Xanax®) will be used to help you relax during the procedure. Your physician will give you a prescription for 2 tablets. Fill this prescription before the procedure.

Naproxen sodium (Aleve®) will be used to lessen pain and leg inflammation after the procedure. You will start this medication after the procedure. The anti-inflammatory effect is important for healing. Purchase a bottle of naproxen sodium or Aleve from any drugstore and bring it with you to the procedure.

Your physician may prescribe ibuprofen or celecoxib (Celebrex®) instead of naproxen sodium, as needed. If you are unable to take NSAIDs or already taking an anti-inflammatory medication, please tell the nurse or physician.

Compression stockings

You will need to bring a pair of thigh-high compression stockings with you to the procedure. Compression stockings come in different compression levels. Your physician will let you know the type you will need for the procedure.

- 20 to 30 mmHg (firm)
- 30 to 40 mmHg (extra firm)

Day of the procedure

The procedure will be done at:

Northwestern Medicine Vein Center
675 North Saint Clair Street, 19-150
Chicago, Illinois 60611

You should arrive 30 minutes before your scheduled procedure time.

What to wear

Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing. Bring your thigh-high compression stockings with you. If you forget your stockings, you may purchase them when you arrive.

Medications

Take your regular medications as directed by your physician.

Take 1 tablet (0.5 mg) of Xanax 1 hour before your scheduled procedure time. Bring the second tablet with you.

Driving

The procedure will be done under local anesthesia (numbing medication), but you will also be given medication to help you relax. Please arrange for a ride to and from the hospital. **Do not drive after you take the Xanax and for the rest of the day after the procedure.**

Diet restrictions

Avoid caffeine until after the procedure. You may have a light breakfast or lunch before your procedure.

After the procedure

Activity

- **Do not drive for the rest of the day after the procedure.** The Xanax may make you drowsy.
- Walking and light activity are encouraged
- Do not do strenuous activities and exercises for 2 weeks.
- Try to keep your legs elevated when you are sitting. This can help lessen swelling and discomfort.
- Do not lift, push or pull more than 15 pounds for 2 weeks.
- Taking a shower is OK after 24 hours. To prevent infection, do not bathe in a tub, swim or soak in water for 2 weeks after the procedure.

If you plan to travel by airplane after the procedure, discuss this with the nurse or physician. You will not be cleared to travel by air until you have seen the physician for your 1-week follow-up visit.

Medication

It is important to take the medication prescribed to you for lessening pain and leg inflammation after the procedure. Take this medication even if you do not have pain. The anti-inflammatory effect is important for healing. If you are taking naproxen sodium or Aleve, take 1 tablet (220 mg) with food 2 times a day for 2 weeks. For other prescribed medications, follow the instructions given to you by your physician.

Compression stockings

Wear the thigh-high compression stockings for **2 to 3 weeks**, as directed by your healthcare provider.

- Week 1 – Wear them day and night, only taking them off 1 to 2 times per day to shower.
- Weeks 2 and 3 – Wear them during the day. You may take them off at bedtime.

Bandages

Leave all bandages and compression stockings in place for the first 24 hours after the procedure. You can remove the bandages and the stockings after 24 hours to shower. Do not remove the Steri-Strips® (tape strips) if you have them on your incisions. The Steri-Strips will fall off on their own within 7 to 10 days. After you have dried your legs completely, put the compression stockings back on. There is no need to apply new bandages.

What to expect

As your legs heal, you may notice discomfort such as tightness, a pulling sensation or hypersensitivity (being very sensitive to touch). You may also develop hard or lumpy, cord-like areas on your legs. Bruising is also normal. You may apply a warm pack to areas of discomfort for 20 minutes, 2 to 3 times per day.

Follow-up visit

When you schedule the procedure, you will also schedule a 1-week follow-up visit. At the follow-up visit, the nurse will see how you are doing. You will have an ultrasound of your leg(s). If needed, you may be asked to return 4 to 6 weeks after the procedure to see the physician, physician assistant or nurse practitioner.

When to call the physician

Please call your physician if you notice any of these symptoms:

- Redness beyond the leg incision
- Pain that is not relieved by the pain medicine
- Swelling that you can see in your leg
- Chills or a temperature greater than 100 degrees F
- Nausea or vomiting
- Drainage or pus from incision sites

Contact information

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the Vein Center

- During regular business hours (8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday), call 312.695.8346.
- After hours and on the weekends, call 312.926.2000 and ask for the Interventional Radiology fellow on call.

If you have questions about insurance or procedure scheduling, call 312.695.4684 (TTY: 711).