

## Vascular - Varicose Vein Surgery

### Introduction

The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would all like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you can support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital.

### Guidance for Patients

Veins are the vessels that carry blood back to the heart. Varicose veins are visible just below the surface of the skin. In the leg there are deep veins which carry the majority of the blood back up the leg to the heart and superficial veins which drain blood from the skin and connect with the deep veins at various points in the leg. Veins become varicosed due to a fault in the one-way valve in the superficial veins. Instead of allowing blood to flow up the leg in these veins, the valves leak; and this backward flow down the veins leads to increased pressure. This causes them to swell and become varicosed. The fault with the valve is often inherited so varicose veins tend to 'run in families'.

Varicose veins do not always need treatment. If your varicose veins are not causing you discomfort, you may not need to have treatment.

Treatment of varicose veins is usually only necessary to:

- ease symptoms – if your varicose veins are causing you pain or discomfort
- treat complications – such as leg ulcers, swelling or skin discolouration

Some people also get treatment for cosmetic reasons – but this kind of treatment is rarely available on the NHS, so you'll usually have to pay for it to be done privately

If treatment is necessary, your doctor may first recommend self care at home.

This may involve:

- using compression stockings (your blood circulation will first be checked to see if these are suitable for you)
- exercising regularly
- avoiding standing up for long periods
- elevating the affected area when resting

### What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

#### Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk). The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

#### Life Threatening Emergencies

For something life threatening – severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains – please dial 999.

## My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

### GP surgeries are still open

GP practice staff are also helping patients to manage their conditions at home while they wait for hospital appointments.

GP surgeries are still open and are working differently to how they did before the COVID-19 pandemic and GP practices continue to make best use of telephone, online and video consultations. Face-to-face appointments are still being given to those who need it.

When you phone or use an online form to contact your GP surgery to make an appointment, you will be asked some questions which are designed to help staff guide you to the most appropriate clinical person to help you with your condition. This could be a nurse, clinical pharmacist, physician's associate, GP or paramedic.

### Contact Us

In some areas, we are experiencing a significant backlog following our response to the Covid-19 pandemic. We are doing everything we can to reduce this backlog including putting on extra clinics and theatre lists and opening additional sites to offer these services. We have also increased the ways we can offer appointments including offering more video and telephone appointments (as well as face to face appointments where appropriate).

Please can we request that you **do not contact your GP practice about waiting times**, as they do not have access to this information.

If you have any concerns or questions please use the contact details on your hospital letter, or if you do not have a letter with these contact details please contact our [Patient Advice & Liaison teams](#).

### Keep Moving

Reducing your weight and getting active are two of the most powerful things you can do for your body and for your mind. Extra weight places additional strain on your lungs and heart, making it harder for the body to cope with surgery and respond to diseases, including COVID-19

Eating a healthy diet will help you get fit and recover quicker after surgery. Being a healthy weight also reduces your risk of blood clots and wound infections afterwards.

[Visit our weight management page for details of local support available.](#)

### Improve Your Health

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone which has caused a lot of people to think more seriously about their health. If you have decided this is the right time for you to make changes check out

[www.nhs.uk/live-well](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well) and [www.nhs.uk/oneyou/](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/)

They can also provide some inspiration for you and your family. The Trust has access to many resources which may help you in making healthier choices, these can be accessed [here](#).

### Good Mental Health

Mental health issues will affect 1 in 4 people at some point in their life. Although FHFT does not itself provide urgent mental health specialist services, we are keen that you can access help and support when you need it. Please visit [FHFT website](#) where you can access links to Mental Health support in the local area.

### Ongoing health conditions

About 15 million people in England have an ongoing health condition.

## My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Long-term conditions or chronic diseases are conditions for which there is currently no cure, and which are managed with drugs and other treatment, for example: diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, arthritis and hypertension (high blood pressure).

If you are living with one of these ongoing health conditions, there are many ways in which you can [look after yourself](#).