



Vascular surgery – Varicose veins





Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the ability for the NHS to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place.

Our waiting lists have been clinically reviewed to ensure patients are seen in priority order and we continue to monitor these lists. This may mean you wait longer for your care, but we will be in touch as soon as possible with details of your appointment.

This document provides you with information on how you can support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital. The guidance has been written by clinicians who are responsible for your care.

Guidance for patients

Varicose veins are veins that have become swollen and enlarged. They usually appear on the legs and feet and can vary in colour, appearing blue or dark purple, and are often lumpy, bulging or twisted in appearance.

Varicose veins are common, and studies suggest that they affect around three in 100 people at some point in their lives. In most cases varicose veins do not cause symptoms or complications, although some people find them unpleasant to look at.

It is important that while you are waiting for your surgery you remain as active and as medically fit as possible. If you have any long-standing condition, you should get this reviewed at your doctor's surgery to make sure it remains well controlled. This will also help prevent any unnecessary delays when you come for your pre-operative assessment. Maintaining a well-balanced diet is also important, as is reducing any excessive weight that may be impacting on your general health. If you are a current smoker it would be advisable to seek support to help with stopping, advice can be found at your local pharmacy or doctor's surgery.

Further links which may help you manage your condition whilst you await treatment can be found below:

- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/>
- <https://www.patientaccess.com/> (Connect to your GP service online)

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

Red Flag Symptoms to look out for

If you experience any of the following whilst waiting for your treatment, please seek urgent advice.



- Bleeding,
- Phlebitis,
- Swelling of the leg,
- Cellulitis,
- Change in skin colour or texture,
- Ulcer.

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. The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Life threatening emergencies

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

GP surgeries are still open

If you experience an increase in pain, an inability to bear weight on this limb or a significant reduction in mobility, you should in the first instance contact your GP for review and advice.

GP surgeries are still open and are working differently to how they did before the COVID-19 pandemic. 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

To change or cancel your appointment please call:

For Luton & Dunstable University Hospital – 01582 561385
Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

For Bedford Hospital – 01234 355122 ext: 2035
Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Alternatively, you can visit our website to request a change to your appointment by following these links:



Luton Site: <https://www.bedfordshirehospitals.nhs.uk/change-cancel-appointment/change-cancel-appointment-luton-and-dunstable-university-hospital/>

Bedford site: [Change / Cancel Your Appointment | Bedford Hospital \(bedfordshirehospitals.nhs.uk\)](https://www.bedfordshirehospitals.nhs.uk/change-cancel-appointment/change-cancel-appointment-bedford-hospital/)

To change or cancel your surgery admission date, please telephone the contact number on your admission letter, Monday to Friday 9am-5pm.

For any other queries, please contact your consultant's secretary. Their contact details will be on the most recent letter from your consultant.