

Varicose veins

Varicose veins are dilated veins. They are common in women and in people who are overweight, have constipation, or spend long periods standing without walking around.

Varicose veins can affect either the deep or superficial veins. The ones that cause the most discomfort are the deep ones.

Dilated capillaries in the legs, even superficial ones, are not varicose veins and are only of cosmetic concern.

What symptoms do they cause?

They cause heaviness, pain, swelling and darkening of the skin. In advanced cases, they can lead to phlebitis (inflammation of the veins) and chronic ulcers.

They tend to worsen in hot weather and during pregnancy.

Postural tips

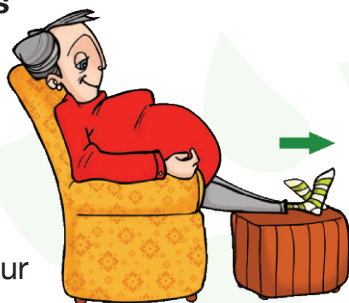
Don't stand still for long periods without walking. If you have to stand, stand on your tiptoes from time to time. Alternatively, place one foot on a stool or a low shelf.

Avoid long journeys, especially by coach or car.

Your **shoes** should be comfortable and without high heels.

Rest for 15 minutes with your feet elevated, several times a day, bending and stretching your ankles.

Avoid sitting with your legs crossed.



Raise the foot of the bed by about 15 cm, or **place cushions under the mattress at the foot end.**

What exercise is recommended?

Take part in physical activities such as walking, swimming or cycling.

At home: walk on your tiptoes and then on your heels. Lie down and move your legs in the air as if you were riding a bike.



Other recommendations

Wash or shower your legs with water, starting with warm water and then cool water. In summer, take a dip in the sea or walk along the shore.

After washing, **massage your legs upwards using a moisturising cream or oil.**

To reduce fluid retention, it is a good idea to eat a **low-salt diet.**

If you are constipated, eat more fruit and vegetables and stay well hydrated.

If you are overweight, try to lose weight.

Avoid tight-fitting clothing, such as girdles, suspenders or elasticated socks. Compression stockings prescribed by your doctor are helpful.

Avoid heat on your legs: excessive sun, radiators, ovens, etc. **Avoid knocks to your legs.**

Oral contraceptives and hormone replacement therapy patches may worsen varicose veins.