

# Patient information and consent to surgery on the short saphenous varicose veins (in the calf of the leg)

## Key messages for patients

- **Please read your admission letter carefully. It is important to follow the instructions we give you about not eating or drinking or we may have to postpone or cancel your operation.**
- **You must not have anything to eat six hours before and no clear fluids two hours before your operation.**
- Please bring with you any medications you use (including patches, creams and herbal remedies) and any information that you have been given relevant to your care in hospital, such as x rays or test results.
- Take your medications as normal on the day of the procedure **unless** you have been specifically told not to take a drug or drugs before or on the day by a member of your medical team. **Do not** take any medications used to treat diabetes.
- Please call the vascular surgery nurse practitioner **01223 245151** ext **6382** if you have any questions or concerns about this procedure.

**Please read this information carefully**, you and your health professional will sign it to document your consent.

After the procedure we will file the consent form in your medical notes and you may take this information leaflet home with you.

## Important things you need to know

Patient choice is an important part of your care. You have the right to change your mind at any time, even after you have given consent and the procedure has started (as long as it is safe and practical to do so). If you are having an anaesthetic you will have the opportunity to discuss this with the anaesthetist, unless the urgency of your treatment prevents this.

We will also only carry out the procedure on your consent form unless, in the opinion of the responsible health professional, a further procedure is needed in order to save your life or prevent serious harm to your health. However, there may be procedures you do not wish us to carry out and these can be recorded on the consent form. We are unable to guarantee that a particular person will perform the procedure. However the person undertaking the procedure will have the relevant experience.

All information we hold about you is stored according to the Data Protection Act 1998.

## About surgery on the short saphenous varicose veins

Varicose veins are very common, affecting at least 10 to 15% of the adult population in the UK. This condition can be embarrassing and painful and, if untreated, can lead to leg swelling, pigmentation of the skin of the lower leg, and ulcers. You have been recommended surgery to remove these varicose veins.

The short saphenous vein starts (at a variable point) behind the knee, and runs underneath the skin of the calf, ending in the foot. Behind the knee, the vein connects with the popliteal vein (in the deep system of veins). At this point, a valve prevents high-pressure blood from the popliteal vein entering the short saphenous vein. In varicose veins, this valve has become leaky.

## Before your procedure

Most patients attend a day surgery pre-admission clinic, when you will meet a nurse trained to prepare you for your procedure. At this clinic, we will ask for details of your medical history and carry out any necessary clinical examinations and investigations. Please ask us any questions about the procedure, and feel free to discuss any concerns you might have at any time.

We will ask if you take any tablets or use any other types of medication either prescribed by a doctor or bought over the counter in a pharmacy. Please bring any packaging with you.

This procedure involves the use of anaesthesia. We explain about the different types of anaesthesia or sedation we may use at the end of this leaflet. You will see an anaesthetist before your procedure.

Depending on the arrangements made for you, you will be admitted to the ward either on the day of, or the day before surgery.

The ward nursing staff will show you to your bed and help you settle in. They will explain the preparations for the operating theatre, and show you where everything is.

You must not have anything to eat six hours before and no clear fluids two hours before your operation.

Your surgeon will visit you before your operation to explain the procedure again and to answer any questions. Your surgeon will then mark the position of the veins on your leg using a highlighter pen. At this point you should indicate any veins that you particularly want removing and these will be marked.

## Hair removal before an operation

For most operations, you do not need to have the hair around the site of the operation removed. However, sometimes the healthcare team need to see or reach your skin and if this is necessary they will use an electric hair clipper with a single-use disposable head, on the day of the surgery.

Please do not shave the hair yourself or use a razor to remove hair, as this can increase the risk of infection. Your healthcare team will be happy to discuss this with you.

## During the procedure

The first part of the operation is to make an incision (cut) in the skin crease behind the knee and find where the short saphenous and popliteal veins join, and then disconnect them. At this point, there are many branching veins coming off the short saphenous vein, which also have to be disconnected.

The short saphenous vein may be removed by either stripping (pulling the vein down to the low calf) or removed in sections through small incisions (2 to 5 mm long), known as avulsions. The varicose branches are removed by avulsions.

The wounds are then closed using self-dissolving sutures (stitches), which are inserted underneath the skin so they cannot be seen. The much smaller avulsion wounds usually heal well without any sutures; occasionally, paper 'steristrips' or glue are used to close these wounds. Very occasionally, a suture is required.

At the end of this operation, compression bandages are applied to the leg to prevent bleeding and bruising. The operation usually takes about 30 to 60 minutes for each leg but you might be away from the ward longer because all patients spend a minimum of half an hour in the recovery room while they wake up from the anaesthetic.

## After the procedure

Once your surgery is completed you will usually be transferred to the recovery ward where you will be looked after by specially trained nurses, under the direction of your anaesthetist. The nurses will monitor you closely until the effects of any general anaesthetic have adequately worn off and you are conscious. They will monitor your heart rate, blood pressure and oxygen levels too. You may be given oxygen via a facemask, fluids via your drip and appropriate pain relief until you are comfortable enough to return to your ward.

Sometimes, people feel sick after an operation, especially after a general anaesthetic, and might vomit. If you feel sick, please tell a nurse and you will be offered medicine to make you more comfortable.

After certain major operations you may be transferred to the intensive care unit (ICU/ITU), high dependency unit (HDU), intermediate dependency area (IDA) or fast track/overnight intensive recovery (OIR). These are areas where you will be monitored much more closely because of the nature of your operation or because of certain pre-existing health problems that you may have. If your surgeon or anaesthetist believes you should go to one of these areas after your operation, they will tell you and explain to you what you should expect.

**If there is not a bed in the necessary unit on the day of your operation, your operation may be postponed as it is important that you have the correct level of care after major surgery.**



**Eating and drinking.** When you are sufficiently awake, you can start drinking fluids again and have something light to eat.



**Getting about after the procedure.** As explained above, your leg will be bandaged firmly. You should remain in bed for the first hour, and if you require anything, use the nurse-call button. Later, when the nursing staff are happy with your progress, you may sit up and get out of bed under supervision.



**Leaving hospital.** The operation can be performed either as a day case or with an overnight stay.



**Resuming normal activities including work.**

- You will probably need 7 to 14 days off work. Please return when you feel comfortable.
- Avoid driving until you are pain-free and in full control of the vehicle (usually about seven days).
- Walk as much as possible to keep the blood circulating in the leg. Avoid standing for any long period of time, avoid crossing your legs and elevate the legs when resting.
- You may resume sex when it is comfortable.



**Special measures after the procedure**

- Self-adherent compression bandages, or non-adherent crepe bandages, will be removed after 24 to 48 hours.
- Once the bandages are removed, we will give you a pair of compression stockings to wear for the next two weeks, or until your legs feel comfortable. The purpose of the stockings is to support the leg, to help blood flow through the deep veins of the leg and to reduce the amount of bruising and tenderness.
- At night, the stockings can be removed if this is more comfortable. Bleeding through the bandages or stockings can occur; this is not unusual and is nothing to worry about. If this happens, please elevate the legs, apply continuous pressure to the point of bleeding for 10 to 20 minutes and it should stop. If you are still concerned, please call the daytime number for the hospital given to you on the information sheet, or you can call your GP.
- The small avulsion wounds on your leg(s) will usually be closed with tape or glue rather than sutures. The main wound behind the knee will be closed by dissolvable sutures underneath the skin. Try to keep these wounds dry for three days. After that, you may take a shower but try to avoid soaking the wounds in a bath until after five days. In water, the tape will come off the leg wounds but do not worry about this. Rarely, there might be some sutures to remove, and the ward nursing staff will arrange for this to be performed.



**Check-ups and results:** The vascular specialist nurse will telephone you to assess your recovery. We may give you a date to return to clinic if required. At this time, we can check your progress and discuss any further treatment.

## Intended benefits

To remove the uncomfortable and/or unsightly veins from your leg and prevent growth or recurrence of the varicose veins.

## Who will perform my procedure?

This procedure will be performed by the consultant vascular surgeon and the vascular surgical registrar.

## Alternative procedures that are available

**Foam sclerotherapy:** an injection can be used to cause scarring and eventual blockage to the faulty vein causing the varicosities. This avoids surgical stripping. The injection technique may not last as long as surgery, and can have other side effects (phlebitis, staining).

**Thermal ablation (laser or radiofrequency).** The faulty vein in the leg can be treated by heat, which damages the vein and causes it to seal off (block). This is more effective than foam injection and can be performed under local anaesthetic. For very large or extensive veins it may not be appropriate.

## Significant, unavoidable or frequently occurring risks of this procedure

Removing varicose veins always produces some bruising and soreness. The severity of this depends on how many veins are removed. Sometimes, it can take several weeks for all the bruising to settle completely.

The main wound behind the knee may become infected. Pain and redness can indicate infection, which can usually be treated by a course of antibiotics. The same applies to other wounds on the leg (avulsions).

Small nerves lying next to the veins can be disturbed, which can lead to patches of numbness in the lower leg and foot in 10 to 20% of patients. This usually resolves over the first year after surgery but occasionally, it is permanent.

Rarely, a deep vein thrombosis (blood clot; DVT) can occur in the deeper veins of the leg and, occasionally, this can lead to a pulmonary embolus (blood clot to the lung). Blood clots on the lung can be fatal. Thrombosis occurs in less than 1% of patients.

Varicose veins can grow back (recur), usually by regrowth of the veins. After five years, 10% of patients may experience this recurrence.

## Anaesthesia

Anaesthesia means 'loss of sensation'. There are three types of anaesthesia: general, regional and local. **The type of anaesthesia chosen by your anaesthetist depends on the nature of your surgery as well as your health and fitness.** Sometimes different types of anaesthesia are used together.

### Before your operation

Before your operation you will meet an anaesthetist who will discuss with you the most appropriate type of anaesthetic for your operation, and pain relief after your surgery.

To inform this decision, he/she will need to know about:

- your general health, including previous and current health problems
- whether you or anyone in your family has had problems with anaesthetics
- any medicines or drugs you use
- whether you smoke
- whether you have had any abnormal reactions to any drugs or have any other allergies
- your teeth, whether you wear dentures, or have caps or crowns.

Your anaesthetist may need to listen to your heart and lungs, ask you to open your mouth and move your neck and may review your test results.

### Pre-medication

You may be prescribed a 'premed' prior to your operation. This a drug or combination of drugs which may be used to make you sleepy and relaxed before surgery, provide pain relief, reduce the risk of you being sick, or have effects specific for the procedure that you are going to have or for any medical conditions that you may have. Not all patients will be given a premed or will require one and the anaesthetist will often use drugs in the operating theatre to produce the same effects.

### Moving to the operating room or theatre

You will usually change into a gown before your operation and we will take you to the operating suite. When you arrive in the theatre or anaesthetic room, monitoring devices may be attached to you, such as a blood pressure cuff, heart monitor (ECG) and a monitor to check your oxygen levels (a pulse oximeter). An intravenous line (drip) may be inserted and you may be asked to breathe oxygen through a face mask.

It is common practice nowadays to allow a parent into the anaesthetic room with children; as the child goes unconscious, the parent will be asked to leave.

**Before starting your anaesthesia the medical team will perform a check of your name, personal details and confirm the operation you are expecting.**

## General anaesthesia

During general anaesthesia you are put into a state of unconsciousness and you will be unaware of anything during the time of your operation. Your anaesthetist achieves this by giving you a combination of drugs.

While you are unconscious and unaware your anaesthetist remains with you at all times. He or she monitors your condition and administers the right amount of anaesthetic drugs to maintain you at the correct level of unconsciousness for the period of the surgery. Your anaesthetist will be monitoring such factors as heart rate, blood pressure, heart rhythm, body temperature and breathing. He or she will also constantly watch your need for fluid or blood replacement.

## What will I feel like afterwards?

How you will feel will depend on the type of anaesthetic and operation you have had, how much pain relieving medicine you need and your general health.

Most people will feel fine after their operation. Some people may feel dizzy, sick or have general aches and pains. Others may experience some blurred vision, drowsiness, a sore throat, headache or breathing difficulties.

You may have fewer of these effects after local or regional anaesthesia. When the effects of the anaesthesia wear off you may need pain relieving medicines.

## What are the risks of general anaesthesia?

In modern anaesthesia, serious problems are uncommon. Risks cannot be removed completely, but modern equipment, training and drugs have made it a much safer procedure in recent years. The risk to you as an individual will depend on whether you have any other illness, personal factors (such as smoking or being overweight) or surgery which is complicated, long or performed in an emergency.

### **Very common (1 in 10 people) and common side effects (1 in 100 people)**

Feeling sick and vomiting after surgery

Sore throat

Dizziness, blurred vision

Headache

Bladder problems

Damage to lips or tongue (usually minor)

Itching

Aches, pains and backache

Pain during injection of drugs

Bruising and soreness

Confusion or memory loss

**Uncommon side effects and complications (1 in 1000 people)**

Chest infection

Muscle pains

Slow breathing (depressed respiration)

Damage to teeth

An existing medical condition getting worse

Awareness (becoming conscious during your operation)

**Rare (1 in 10,000 people) and very rare (1 in 100,000 people) complications**

Damage to the eyes

Heart attack or stroke

Serious allergy to drugs

Nerve damage

Death

Equipment failure

Deaths caused by anaesthesia are very rare. There are probably about five deaths for every million anaesthetics in the UK.

## Information about important questions on the consent form

### 1 Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease ('CJD')

We must take special measures with hospital instruments if there is a possibility you have been at risk of CJD or variant CJD disease. We therefore ask all patients undergoing any surgical procedure if they have been told that they are at increased risk of either of these forms of CJD. This helps prevent the spread of CJD to the wider public. A positive answer will not stop your procedure taking place, but enables us to plan your operation to minimise any risk of transmission to other patients.

### 2 Photography, Audio or Visual Recordings

As a leading teaching hospital we take great pride in our research and staff training. We ask for your permission to use images and recordings for your diagnosis and treatment, they will form part of your medical record. We also ask for your permission to use these images for audit and in training medical and other healthcare staff and UK medical students; you do not have to agree and if you prefer not to, this will not affect the care and treatment we provide. We will ask for your separate written permission to use any images or recordings in publications or research.

### 3 Students in training

Training doctors and other health professionals is essential to the NHS. Your treatment may provide an important opportunity for such training, where necessary under the careful supervision of a registered professional. You may, however, prefer not to take part in the formal training of medical and other students without this affecting your care and treatment.

### 4 Use of Tissue

As a leading bio-medical research centre and teaching hospital, we may be able to use tissue not needed for your treatment or diagnosis to carry out research, for quality control or to train medical staff for the future. Any such research, or storage or disposal of tissue, will be carried out in accordance with ethical, legal and professional standards. In order to carry out such research we need your consent. Any research will only be carried out if it has received ethical approval from a Research Ethics Committee. You do not have to agree and if you prefer not to, this will not in any way affect the care and treatment we provide. The leaflet '*Donating tissue or cells for research*' gives more detailed information. Please ask for a copy.

If you wish to withdraw your consent on the use of tissue (including blood) for research, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), on **01223 216756**.

## Information and support



We will give you additional information in the form of patient information leaflets. Do feel free to contact the vascular surgery nurse practitioner **01223 245151** ext **6382** if you have any questions or anxieties.

Further information is available from The Vascular Society Website:

<http://www.vascularsociety.org.uk>



## Privacy & Dignity

Same sex bays and bathrooms are offered in all wards except critical care and theatre recovery areas where the use of high-tech equipment and/or specialist one to one care is required.



We are currently working towards a smoke free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas. For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

## Help with this leaflet



If you would like this information in **large print**, another language or in audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information on 01223 216032 or

[patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)



## Document history

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# Consent Form

## Surgery on the short saphenous varicose veins

For staff use only:

Hospital number:

Surname:

First names:

Date of birth:

NHS no: \_ \_ \_ / \_ \_ \_ / \_ \_ \_ \_

Use hospital identification label

**A** Patient's side left / right or N/A

### Consultant or other responsible health professional

Name and job title: .....

Any special needs of the patient (e.g. help with communication)? .....

Please use 'Procedure completed' stamp here on completion:

### **B** Statement of health professional (details of treatment, risks and benefits)

**1** I confirm I am a health professional with an **appropriate knowledge of the proposed procedure**, as specified in the hospital's consent policy. I have explained the procedure to the patient. In particular, I have explained:

**a)** the intended benefits of the procedure (please state)

To remove the uncomfortable / unsightly veins from your leg, and prevent their growth or recurrence.

**b)** the possible risks involved. Addenbrooke's always ensures any risks are minimised. However all procedures carry some risk and I have set out below any significant, unavoidable or frequently occurring risks including those specific to the patient

- produces some bruising and soreness
- small nerves lying next to the veins can be disturbed
- rarely, a deep vein thrombosis (blood clot, DVT) can occur
- varicose veins can grow back (recur)

**c)** what the treatment or procedure is likely to involve, the benefits and risks of any available alternative treatments (including no treatment) and any particular concerns of this patient:

# Consent Form

For staff use only:

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Date of birth:

NHS no: \_ \_ \_ / \_ \_ \_ / \_ \_ \_ \_

Use hospital identification label

## Surgery on the short saphenous varicose veins

**d)** any extra procedures that might become necessary during the procedure such as:

Blood transfusion  Other procedure (please state)

.....  
.....

The following information leaflet has been provided:

Surgery on the short saphenous varicose veins

Version, reference and date: V4, CF204, April 2012

or  I have offered the patient information about the procedure but this has been declined.

**3** This procedure will involve:

General and/or regional anaesthesia  Local anaesthesia  Sedation  None

**Signed** (Health professional): ..... Date:   /  /  

**Name** (PRINT): ..... Time (24hr):   :  :  

**Designation:** ..... Contact/bleep no: .....

### C Consent of patient / person with parental responsibility

**I confirm that the risks, benefits and alternatives of this procedure have been discussed with me and that my questions have been answered to my satisfaction and understanding.**

**Important:** please read the patient information about this procedure and then put a tick in the relevant boxes for the following questions:

#### 1 Creutzfeldt Jakob disease (CJD)

Have you ever been notified that you are at risk of CJD or variant CJD for public health purposes? If yes, please inform your health professional.  Yes  No

#### 2 Photography, Audio or Visual Recording

**a) I agree** to the use of any of the above type of recordings for the purpose of diagnosis and treatment.  Yes  No

**b) I agree** to unidentified versions of any of the above recordings being used for audit and medical teaching in a healthcare setting.  Yes  No

#### 3 Students in training

**I agree** to the involvement of medical and other students as part of their formal training.  Yes  No

# Consent Form

## Surgery on the short saphenous varicose veins

For staff use only:

Hospital number:

Surname:

First names:

Date of birth:

NHS no: \_ \_ \_ / \_ \_ \_ / \_ \_ \_ \_

Use hospital identification label

### 4 Use of Tissue

a) **I agree** that tissue (including blood) not needed for my own diagnosis or treatment can be used and stored for ethically approved research which may include ethically approved genetic research.

Yes  No

b) *Where additional clinical information is needed for the purposes of ethically approved research, I agree* that relevant sections of my medical record may be looked at by researchers or by relevant regulatory authorities. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my records.

Yes  No

I have listed below any procedures that **I do not wish to be carried out without further discussion.**

**I have read and understood** the Patient Information about this procedure and the above additional information. **I agree** to the procedure or treatment.

**Signed** (Patient): ..... Date: *DD/MM/YYYY*

**Name of patient** (PRINT): .....

*If signing for a child or young person; delete if not applicable.*

**I confirm** I am a person with **parental responsibility** for the patient named on this form.

**Signed:** ..... Date: *DD/MM/YYYY*

**Relationship to patient:** .....

*If the patient is unable to sign but has indicated his/her consent, a witness should sign below.*

**Signed** (Witness): ..... Date: *DD/MM/YYYY*

**Name of witness** (PRINT): .....

**Address:** .....

# Consent Form

## Surgery on the short saphenous varicose veins

**For staff use only:**

Hospital number:

Surname:

First names:

Date of birth:

NHS no: \_ \_ \_ / \_ \_ \_ / \_ \_ \_ \_

Use hospital identification label

### D Confirmation of consent

**Confirmation of consent** (where the treatment/procedure has been discussed in advance)

On behalf of the team treating the patient, I have confirmed with the patient that she/he has no further questions and wishes the treatment/procedure to go ahead.

**Signed** (Health professional): ..... Date:   D  D  /  M  M  /  Y  Y  Y  Y  .....

**Name** (PRINT): ..... Job title: .....

**Please initial to confirm all sections have been completed:** .....

### E Interpreter's statement (if appropriate)

I have interpreted the information to the best of my ability, and in a way in which I believe the patient can understand:

**Signed** (Interpreter): ..... Date:   D  D  /  M  M  /  Y  Y  Y  Y  .....

**Name** (PRINT): .....

Or, please note the language line reference ID number: .....

### F Withdrawal of patient consent

The patient has withdrawn consent (ask patient to sign and date here)

**Signed** (Patient): ..... Date:   D  D  /  M  M  /  Y  Y  Y  Y  .....

**Signed** (Health professional): ..... Date:   D  D  /  M  M  /  Y  Y  Y  Y  .....

**Name** (PRINT): ..... Job title: .....