



Health Bulletin



Walking Away From Varicose Veins

(NAPSA)—Clearing up some popular misconceptions about a common condition could be good for your health.

Varicose veins—which generally appear as twisting, bulging, ropelike cords on the legs—affect an estimated 40 percent of women and 25 percent of men in the U.S., according to the *Journal of Vascular and Interventional Radiology*.

While many consider the veins to be solely a cosmetic problem, doctors say they could lead to serious health issues.

Indeed, many people with varicose veins experience leg symptoms such as pain, heaviness or tiredness, burning or tingling sensations, swelling, throbbing and tenderness. If symptoms are left untreated, they may progress toward complications including:

- Inflammation (known as phlebitis)
- Blood clots
- Ankle sores or skin ulcers
- Bleeding.

People who experience the above symptoms or complications are advised to see a doctor, who may provide treatments. Here's a closer look at the often-misunderstood disease that causes varicose veins:

Possible Causes

Arteries carry blood from the heart to the extremities, delivering oxygen deep into the tissue.

Veins then return the “deoxygenated” blood back to the heart to be recirculated.

To return this blood to the heart, leg veins must work against gravity.

Small, one-way valves in the



A simple, safe and fast procedure could eliminate some people's varicose veins.

veins open to allow blood to flow upward, toward the heart, and then close to prevent it from flowing backward.

Varicose veins occur when the valves in superficial leg veins malfunction.

When this occurs, the valve may be unable to close, allowing blood that should be moving toward the heart to flow backward (called venous reflux).

Blood then collects in the lower veins, causing them to enlarge and become varicose.

Factors leading to varicose veins include heredity, gender, pregnancy and age. But other factors, such as prolonged standing or sitting, obesity, hormone levels and physical trauma, may speed up the development of the disease and make the veins worse.

An Ounce Of Prevention

Certain measures may help relieve discomfort from existing varicose veins and prevent other

varicose veins from developing.

They include:

- Exercising regularly (walking is ideal)
- Wearing graduated compression stockings
- Avoiding standing for long periods of time
- Avoiding sitting for long periods of time
- Controlling weight.

Finding Treatment

It's important to speak with a physician about varicose veins.

Doctors often first attempt to treat the disease with simple approaches, such as graduated compression stockings, but if veins do not respond, a more active treatment may be required.

For instance, a fast, safe and effective procedure called VenaCure EVLT™ (endovenous laser treatment) can nearly eliminate varicose veins in less than an hour and without a hospital stay.

It uses a targeted laser energy to seal unhealthy veins shut, providing nearly immediate relief of symptoms. The procedure, which can be performed in a doctor's office without general anesthesia, produces few to no scars and has a 95 percent success rate, and patients can quickly resume their normal activities once treatment is complete.

You can learn more by visiting www.venacure-evlt.com, a Web site dedicated to informing and educating patients about venous disease. The Web site also features a physician finder tool to help patients locate area doctors who are trained in the latest techniques to treat varicose veins.