ADVANCED Vascular
vascular and endovascular surgery

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Endovenous Treatment with Radiofrequency Ablation

About Endovenous treatment (EVT):

It is a minimally invasive treatment for varicose veins. It has been approved by Medicare and recently allocated a Medicare item number and also covered by private health insurance.

The size and shape of the varicose veins will determine whether it is suitable for EVT. The catheter is attached to a generator which is used to close (obliterate) the varicose vein using locally directed heat, redirecting blood through other healthy veins.

The procedure is performed under general or local anaesthesia as day surgery or in the rooms.

Prior to the procedure:

- All patients will be fully assessed and an ultrasound scan will be performed to determine suitability for the treatment

During the procedure:

- General anaesthesia or local analgesia and preparation of the leg with antiseptics
- Ultrasound scan will be used to insert a catheter into the vein
- A wire followed by a catheter will be introduced
- Local analgesia will be infiltrated along the vein up to the groin.
- The generator will create heat energy to seal the vein form the inside, which takes few minutes.
- The probe is then removed
- Occasionally varicose veins marked by the surgeon may be removed through small incisions (phlebectomies). The small incisions are closed with steristrips and can be removed in 5 days
- Tight bandage will be applied for 1 day and replaced with class 2 stockings for 1 week.

Following the procedure:

- You will be able to walk
- If the bandage is too tight, please loosen it or remove completely and apply the stockings
- Normal activities can be resumed including work in 5 days although contact sports, heavy exercise and swimming should be avoided for 2 weeks
- When the bandage is removed you may notice some bruising or hardness under the skin which is normal and will settle on its own
- You can take pain killers like paracetamol or Neurofen if you have no contraindications
- Some smaller veins might not disappear immediately, most will in 6 weeks. If any residual veins are still present, injection sclerotherapy in the rooms can be used

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Follow up:

- A follow up appointment will be arranged in 6 weeks
- An **ultrasound scan** will be performed to ensure the vein has occluded and to exclude deep vein thrombosis (DVT)

Risks of the procedure:

- Small chance the vein might not completely occlude (3%)
- Bruising or tenderness that last longer than 3 days especially if you had veins removed by small incisions
- Some discomfort around the treated vein 5-10 days after the procedure due to inflammation. If this occurs you might require some anti-inflammatory tablets like Neurofen
- 1-5% of patients might experience some numbness in the leg which is almost always temporary
- Small chance of skin burns
- Small risk of deep vein thrombosis (DVT)

If you have any concern, please read the next section of FAQs. If unable to find the answer to your query, please call our rooms on 0800 144 832 or send an email to Reception@AdvancedVascular.co.nz

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FAQs

1. I had my veins treated 1 week ago and now I have pain and redness along the treated vein. Is that normal?
Yes, it can occur in some patients to develop inflammation of the vein called thrombophlebitis, that means the treatment is working. It will resolve with pain relief and stockings in few days. There is no need to have an ultrasound, as it will only show the thrombophlebitis

2. The treated vein feels hard and some other veins also feel hard. Is that normal?
Yes, it is normal for the vein or its branches to feel hard, as it has been treated with heat. It will resolve in few weeks.

3. I have bruising where the veins were treated or removed, do I need to worry?
No need to worry about bruising, it can look extensive however that is to be expected especially if you have veins removed by small cuts. The bruising will disappear on its own in few weeks.

4. I have some numbness along the treated vein.
That is normal as the heat can affect small nerves. It will resolve on its own

5. The veins have not disappeared after I took the bandage off
It takes time for the treated veins to disappear. It is more of a process rather than magic. If not completely gone in 6 weeks, injection sclerotherapy in the rooms can be used to treat any small residual veins

6. Can I shower with the stockings?
Yes you can. You will normally have a pair of stockings that you can exchange. If you had both legs treated then it is best not to shower with the stockings

7. When can I drive?
You can drive 2 days after the procedure if you have no significant discomfort to affect your driving

8. I am going on an flight next week. Is that OK?
It is OK to fly. You can use the stockings during the flight, keep moving every 1-2 hours and keep well hydrated.

9. When can I swim?
Usually 1 week after the procedure if done under local analgesia or 2 weeks if under general anaesthesia.

10. How long do I need the stockings for? Do I wear them day and night?
You only need the stockings for 1 week. If you can, please apply day and night for the first 3 days then only during the daytime.

11. The stockings are uncomfortable? Can I take them off?
Yes you can if they make you feel uncomfortable

12. How much is the follow up scan?
The follow up scan is bulk-billed, so no cost to you

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