

NORTHWEST **Vascular and Vein** *Specialists*

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EVLT - Non-Surgical Treatment for Vein Disorders

EVLT - endovenous laser therapy - is a safe and simple treatment that closes veins that are not working properly without surgery.

During EVLT, a laser is placed in a non-functioning vein using ultrasound to guide placement. The laser is advanced inside the vein until it reaches the entire length of abnormal vein. The vein is then surrounded with numbing medication using a small needle. The laser is then turned on and is slowly withdrawn. The laser energy causes the vein to permanently close and disappear. The body immediately re-routes the blood to normal veins. No other tissue in the leg is affected.

Patient satisfaction with endovenous laser therapy is high. A prominent study published in the Journal of Vascular and Interventional Radiology showed better than a 93% success rate after two years. These results are comparable or superior to other methods for treating varicose veins, including surgery, with lower rates of complication and the avoidance of general anesthesia.

If you have lumpy varicose veins, these may shrink down considerably after having endovenous laser therapy. However, you may still want to have these removed. This can be accomplished either at the same time of the EVLT or weeks after using a technique called micro-phlebectomy. Varicose veins are marked with the patient standing and then the area is sterilized and anesthetized. Small cuts in the skin allow these veins to be removed without requiring any stitches. Butterfly bandages and compressive dressings are placed that remain in place for 2 weeks. These bandages are waterproof and allow patients to shower daily.

Patients wear support stockings for 2 weeks from the first EVLT procedure. In order to avoid contamination, we perform EVLT on 1 leg at a time and 1 vein at a time. We separate procedures on different legs by at least 2 weeks. We perform EVLT procedures in our office several days a week so that if multiple procedures are required on one leg, they can be stacked together over the course of a week.

Reasons for Having EVLT

Vein disorders are not only a just a cosmetic problem. They can cause discomfort and pose significant health threats. Vein treatments can eliminate aching, throbbing, cramping, swelling and heaviness in the legs. It can also reduce the dangers of non-healing wounds and blood clots posed by varicose veins.

Most everyone is a candidate for endovenous laser therapy. Advantages of EVLT include minimal recovery, return to activities of daily living almost immediately, return to work the next day, minimal pain, and dramatic improvement in vein-associated symptoms.

Risks Involved in EVLT

Endovenous laser therapy is a very safe procedure. Potential but uncommon side effects include:

- Bruising or bleeding at the puncture site, or infection (from catheter insertion).
- Local parasthesias (10%)
- Blood clot or inflammation in the vein
- Insufficient closure of the varicose vein, requiring an additional treatment (1%)
- Injury to skin (1%)
- Deep vein thrombosis (1%)
- Hyperpigmentation (1%)

Insurance Coverage

Endovenous laser therapy is usually covered by insurance after a trial of conservative therapy by wearing support stockings and leg elevation. Medicare and HMO's do not require a trial of conservative therapy. We will pre-certify or do a predetermination for your procedures if required. Although Insurance companies may pre-certify your procedure, this is "not a guarantee of payment." If you have further questions you should contact your insurance carrier.

Preparation Guidelines

Following are the preparation guidelines for endovenous laser therapy. Please contact us at 847-577-5814 if you have any questions.

- **Bring your 20-30MMHG thigh-hi compressions stockings to the office on the day of the procedure. (NOT the white ted hose you get from the hospital) These must be obtained by a prescription provided by your physician.**
- **There are no diet restrictions prior to the procedure. You may eat and drink right up to your appointment.**
- **Do not discontinue any medications prior to your procedure.**
- **Please shower on the day of the procedure but do not apply lotion to your legs.**
- **Fill your Mobic prescription prior to the procedure. You will begin taking this medication after your procedure.**
- **Fill you Valium prescription prior to the procedure and bring the pills to the office but do not take them until instructed to do so.**
- **Please arrange for a ride to and from the office on the day of the procedure if you will be taking the Valium as prescribed. If you are not taking the Valium you may drive yourself.**
- **Wear loose fitting clothes on the day of the procedure.**

What to Expect During Your Varicose Vein Treatment

When you come in for the procedure you can ask any last minute questions and then sign the consent form and an insurance waiver

guaranteeing payment. You will be escorted to our Vein Procedure Room and then change into a gown. We will mark your varicose veins if you are having them removed. You will be given goggles to protect your eyes from exposure to the laser light during the procedure. Your leg will be sterilized and sterile drapes will be placed over you.

At this point your doctor will begin the procedure. Ken, our ultrasound technician, will show your doctor where the non-functioning vein is under the skin surface. A small needle will anesthetize the area and catheter will be placed into the vein just like drawing blood or starting an IV. After the catheter is in place, the laser will be advanced into the vein using ultrasound to guide us. Local anesthetic will be applied along the length of the vein to make the procedure virtually painless. The laser is turned on and slowly removed, closing the vein as it is withdrawn. The laser exits where it entered.

The entry site will be cleaned and dressed. We will put the compression stockings on for you and then you can change back into your normal clothes.

You will have an ultrasound within 2-7 days after your last treatment on one leg. The ultrasound technician will perform an ultrasound to ensure that the non-functioning vein has been completely closed and no blood clots have developed.

Cancellation Policy

We must be notified of cancellations of the procedure within 24 hours of your scheduled date or you will be subject to \$100.00 cancellation/No show fee.

Recovering from Your Procedure

1. Take it easy the rest of the day following the procedure.
2. If you have had varicose veins removed, keep your leg elevated above your heart most of the day.
3. The day after the procedure you may resume normal activity but avoid heavy lifting or high-impact exercise.
4. The compression stockings are to be worn 24 hours a day except for showering for 1 week. During the second week you should wear the stockings only during waking hours.
5. You may remove the clear dressing from the laser procedure after 24 hours, but do not remove the dressings if you had varicose

veins removed. They will be removed in the office at your follow-up appointment. If you feel your dressing is wet please contact the office for further instructions.

6. You may shower the day after the procedure. Do not scrub the area where your bandage is, the plastic cover on your leg is waterproof. Again if your bandage does get wet please contact the office for further instructions. Do not soak in a tub or go swimming.
7. Bruising and redness is normal. You may also feel a tugging sensation for the first week after the procedure. Sometimes people can feel a hard area like a pencil under the skin especially around the knee. This is normal and will go away in a few months. The discomfort goes away in a few weeks but should not inhibit your normal activities. If you are experiencing significant pain, call your doctor. Someone is available 24/7.
8. Take Mobic (Meloxicam) 7.5 mg once daily for 10 days starting the day of the procedure. This is for pain, inflammation and swelling. It should be taken even if you do not have pain. For additional pain control, take Tylenol ES 1-2 tabs every 4-6 hours as needed. DO NOT take aspirin (You may take your regular daily Aspirin regimen if you are on one), Aleve, Motrin or Advil. If you have an adverse reaction to Mobic (Meloxicam), take Aleve 1 pill twice daily for 10 days instead.
9. Make an appointment for 2-7 days after the last procedure for a routine ultrasound to assess your veins. We will arrange this for you after your procedure.
10. Follow up with your surgeon in 2 weeks.

11. WOUND CARE PATIENTS:

PLEASE SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE WOUND CARE CLINIC 1-2 DAYS AFTER YOUR PROCEDURE TO BE RE-WRAPPED. YOU MAY ALSO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT FOR YOUR POST-OP DOPPLER AT THE WOUNDCARE CLINIC. THEY WILL COORDINATE THIS FOR YOU.

Please call the office with any questions 847-577-5814