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New, Less Painful Option for Varicose Vein Sufferers

By ARA Content

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by: **ARA Content**

(ARA) – Being "vain" about their looks was not the primary motivation for schoolteacher Jacqueline Munoz and barber Sal Salvaggio to seek treatment for their varicose veins. Rather, it was the fact that it had become increasingly more painful for them to stand for eight hours a day as required by their professions.

Tens of millions of people around the world suffer from the aches, pains and swelling of varicose veins — symptoms that tend to become more severe by the end of a long day or simply after prolonged sitting or standing. Other factors that can contribute to varicose veins are hormone therapy, heredity, obesity, pregnancy and age. In severe cases, varicose veins can lead to skin changes resulting in eczema, pigmentation discoloring, ulceration and bleeding.

Women are almost twice as likely to have varicose veins as men — 25 percent of women have them. The condition is caused by vein valves that fail to close properly, resulting in blood pooling in the vein walls which then causes an outward push, resulting in obvious visual signs of enlargement and bulging. Pain and discomfort often are associated with severe varicose veins.

In the past, varicose vein sufferers like Munoz had to opt for painful surgical ligation and stripping of the vein. Vein stripping involves a hospital operating room procedure whereby two surgical incisions are made in order to tie off and strip the faulty vein, causing swelling and bruising with a recovery period taking several weeks. "I was in pain and uncomfortable for weeks," said Ms. Munoz.

But Savaggio took a different approach. He discovered recently that the Food and Drug Administration had approved a new, less painful outpatient procedure for the elimination of varicosities associated with reflux of the Greater Saphenous vein. Called Endovenous Laser Treatment or EVLT, the process was developed by Diomed Inc. EVLT is a minimally invasive laser treatment for varicose veins that can be performed under local anesthesia in a doctor's office.

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The treatment itself normally takes less than one hour and initially involves both a physical and ultrasound examination to map the vein, which is then treated with short energy pulses from a laser to seal the abnormal vein. At the end of the procedure, the fiber is withdrawn and a compression bandage is applied. A compression stocking is worn for approximately seven days and the patient is encouraged to resume normal activities, excluding rigorous physical activities.

Patients notice immediate relief from past pain or discomfort. The many patients who have opted for EVLT treatment so far report a short and relatively pain-free procedure as well as an immediate return to daily activities without scarring. Walking immediately following the procedure is encouraged and normal daily activities can be resumed quickly. "I really did feel no pain at all during the treatment. After the procedure, I dressed myself and went back to the shop," said Savaggio.

For those suffering from failure of the Greater Saphenous vein, an EVLT treatment is reimbursable under most medical plans. In an effort to educate varicose vein sufferers about their condition and

provide information regarding less invasive treatments, Massachusetts-based Diomed Inc. has launched a public awareness patient Web site,

. Besides providing more information

about the causes of varicose veins, Diomed Inc. hopes the Web site will help sufferers obtain information regarding EVLT. More information about Diomed Inc. is available at

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Natural Care For Varicose Veins

By Dr. Rita Louise

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Our circulatory system is made up of a complex web of arteries and veins. Our arteries carry oxygen rich blood to the cells of our bodies, while the veins are designed to pump oxygen poor blood back to the heart. This is accomplished through a series of one-way valves that do not allow blood to flow backwards into the vein. When someone suffers from varicose veins, the one-way valves of their veins do not close adequately, resulting in the inefficient transport of blood back to the heart. This causes the blood to flow backward within the vein, creating pressure and causing the vein to become swollen and

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distended.

While rather benign, this health condition affects about 15% of all adults worldwide. Most people recognize varicose veins because of their knotted, twisted, swollen and often bluish of these veins. In addition to any cosmetic concerns they may pose, these veins can cause discomfort in the form of dull nagging aches and pains, night cramps, ankle swelling, feelings of burning or leg fatigue after prolonged standing.

There are a number of factors that play a part in the development of varicose veins including heredity, gender, lifestyle, occupation and age. They are also known to form during pregnancy due to the dilating effect progesterone has on the veins. Because they are associated with lack of circulation, the formation of varicose veins is more common in people who sit or stand in one position for long periods of time, habitually sit with their legs crossed and those who lack regular exercise.

Recommendations For Wellness

Avoid standing for prolonged periods of time. If this is unavoidable, move your legs often. Stretching and flexing your ankle will work to pump the blood out of your legs and get it circulating again.

If you find yourself sitting for extended periods of time, get up and move around every 35 to 45 minutes.

Take regular walks to help exercise the muscles of the legs and increase blood flow.

Avoid clothing that may restrict blood flow.

Keep your weight down. This can help to reduce pressure on your legs.

To help prevent leg and ankle swelling, reduce your salt intake.

Elevate your legs whenever possible especially when sitting.

Topically, witch hazel can be applied to the legs to ease discomfort.

Butcher's broom has historically been used when dealing with circulatory ailments such as varicose veins.

Supplements such as ginkgo biloba, gotu kola or capsicum have been shown to improve circulation.

Coenzyme Q10 also improved tissue oxygenation and increases circulation.

Vitamin C with bioflavonoids and rutin can help this condition by reducing blood clotting tendencies, promoting healing and helping to strengthen the blood vessels.

White oak bark can be used to help reduce inflammation of the veins as well as to tighten tissues and

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strengthen blood vessels.

Essential fatty acids such as omega 3 or flax seed oil can help to reduce the pain and inflammation associated with varicose veins.

Dr. Rita Louise, PhD is a Naturopathic Physician and a 20–year veteran in the Human Potential Field, but it is her unique gift as a medical intuitive that enlivens her work. So whether it is a physical problem, an emotional issue, a problem at work or a problem in a relationship, Dr. Rita Louise, Ph.D. a can help you identify what is really going on and provide you with straightforward guidance and advice. Visit her at <http://www.soulhealer.com>.

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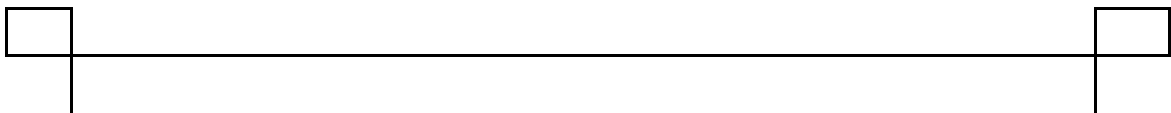
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