

Exeter Vascular

Mr David William Birchley MBBS FRCS (Vasc & Gen) MSc

Venous Surgery

What is venous surgery?

Venous surgery aims to remove both the visible varicose veins and any underlying trunks feeding the visible veins.

The main incompetent trunk(s) in the leg are removed through small incisions top and bottom. Smaller incisions are then made along the varicose veins (which are marked prior to the operation) and the veins removed.

Occasionally just the varicose veins can be removed without stripping the trunk.

What should I expect?

You will be admitted to hospital on the day of your surgery and meet with both nursing staff, Mr Birchley and the anaesthetist. Your veins will be marked and you will be asked to sign a consent form.

Your operation will take place with you asleep in theatre. Afterwards you will return to the ward with your legs bandaged.

Venous surgery is usually performed as a day-case (admission and discharge the same day). Occasionally an overnight stay is advised.

What anaesthetic is required for venous surgery?

You will be asleep (general anaesthetic).

What are the advantages of venous surgery?

Venous surgery is a reliable technique for treating varicose veins (first time and recurrent), whatever their size. The veins are completely removed and one operation should be sufficient to remove all significant varicosities.

What are the disadvantages of venous surgery?

Surgery involves an operation and therefore you will have some “Down time” after – usually about a week although you should be up and about and comfortable very quickly.

What are the risks of venous surgery?

Risks may be considered in relation to general risks of surgery, wound complications and specific risks of venous surgery:

- **General risks** include deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and complications related to general anaesthesia.
- **Wound complications** can include:
 - Bleeding
 - Bruising (which is common)
 - Infection
 - Visible scarring
- **Specific risks** include:
 - Recurrent varicose veins
 - Nerve injury (with numbness) which may or may not resolve
 - Thread veins may be more prominent after surgery and Mr Birchley cannot guarantee to remove all visible veins

What aftercare is required?

After the surgery, your leg will be bandaged from toes to knee or upper thigh, depending on the operation performed. The bandaging can be exchanged for a compression stocking after 24 hours.

- If your surgery is to be performed as an inpatient (with an overnight stay) the ward nurses will do this.
- If your surgery is scheduled as a day-case please make an appointment with the practice nurse at your GP surgery for dressing changes the day after your surgery.

When can I return to normal activities?

You are encouraged to return to normal activities as soon as possible (including gentle exercise). Let your body guide you - if it is uncomfortable, don't do it until you feel comfortable!

Do not drive for a week after venous surgery. Then make sure you are happy and safe controlling the vehicle before you go out on the road.

Follow-up is with Mr Birchley in 6 weeks for a clinical and duplex examination.