

HEALTHY-LOOKING LEGS: More Than Just a Cosmetic Concern?

WHEN MEGHAN SHOWED her varicose veins to her primary care physician, the doctor referred her to RIA Endovascular for a leg vein assessment. Meghan, thinking the referral was mostly for cosmetic reasons, was about to learn that she actually had a potentially serious medical condition called venous reflux or venous insufficiency. If left untreated, the condition could lead to even more problems down the road.

Venous reflux is caused by faulty valves in the superficial leg veins that result in blood flowing in the wrong direction — down the legs — instead of back toward the heart. Pooling blood increases pressure in the veins, causing problems in the legs. This increases pressure in the leg veins.

Some 30 million men and women in the United States suffer from symptomatic venous reflux disease. Varicose veins result from such venous reflux and can produce symptoms, including leg pain, swelling and heaviness; burning and itching; skin changes, such as discoloration, inflammation and sores; and a less-than-attractive appearance.

“We treat veins and arteries throughout the body. Physicians send us their cosmetic vein patients because they are confident we will catch any less readily apparent, but serious issues.”

— David Porter, M.D., an interventional and endovascular physician at RIA Endovascular

Meghan, like most busy moms who take care of everyone else before themselves, had come to consider leg swelling and heaviness as the day progressed to be her “norm.” She didn’t think her varicose veins were the culprit.

Following an ultrasound to determine the extent of her vein damage, she consulted with Peter Stratil, M.D., an interventional radiologist at RIA Endovascular. Although Meghan thought that laser treatment might be the answer — a common belief as a result of exposure to cosmetic vein treatment advertising — a treatment plan consisting of radiofrequency ablation and foam sclerotherapy was selected as the recommended course of treatment for her specific situation.

“More than 90% of our physician-referred patients present with lifestyle-limiting symptoms,” says Dr. Stratil. “Physicians regularly refer to us for intractable leg pain, leg swelling, and a tired feeling in the legs that increases throughout the day, as well as for cosmetic concerns.”

RIA Endovascular offers a complete range of minimally invasive, clinically proven treatment options for varicose veins including laser ablation, ambulatory phlebectomy, sclerotherapy, foam sclerotherapy and radiofrequency ablation procedures.

“With technology today, there is rarely a need to do highly invasive, more risky surgical vein stripping in a more costly hospital setting,” says Brooke Spencer, M.D., Medical Director of RIA Endovascular.

Meghan’s symptoms quickly resolved following treatment. She wore support hose for a brief time. She immediately went back to work and returned to an active life with her husband and three kids.

VEIN TREATMENT MODALITIES

- + Compression therapy — Patients wear gradient compression stockings and hosiery.
- + Foam sclerotherapy — “Sclerosant” medicine causes vein to close and eventually disappear.
- + Laser — Ultrasound-guided light energy seals the vein shut.
- + Radiofrequency (RF) — Intermittent RF waves heat and ablate the vein.
- + Ambulatory (Micro) phlebectomy — Physicians use a vein tool to lift out the vein through a small incision.



Both men and women can have varicose vein issues, particularly nurses, flight attendants, construction workers, cashiers, teachers and hair stylists — or any other profession that requires standing for long periods of time.

“I have my doctor to thank for catching this problem early on. Now my legs feel healthy!” reports Meghan. “I wasn’t even thinking about how I’d look at the pool or hiking in the mountains this summer. Not only are my legs healthy, but they look great!”

In addition to treating chronic venous insufficiency with minimally invasive endovascular surgery, RIA Endovascular regularly performs general interventional radiology, interventional oncology, women’s and spinal procedures. For more information and to refer patients to RIA Endovascular, visit www.RIAEndovascular.com or call (720) 493-3406. ■