

Varicose Veins



The Department of Surgery sees patients for a wide range of surgical services. These include Colorectal, Endocrine, Breast, Upper GI, Bariatrics, Hepatobiliary, Plastics, Neurosurgery, Urology and Vascular Surgery. Our highly qualified consultants use minimally-invasive surgery and surgical endoscopy for diagnostic and therapeutic interventions in the treatment of these conditions. We provide inpatient and outpatient care with a 24-hour acute surgical service. Day surgery (endoscopy) and minor surgery (lumps and bumps) are also offered at Jurong Medical Centre.

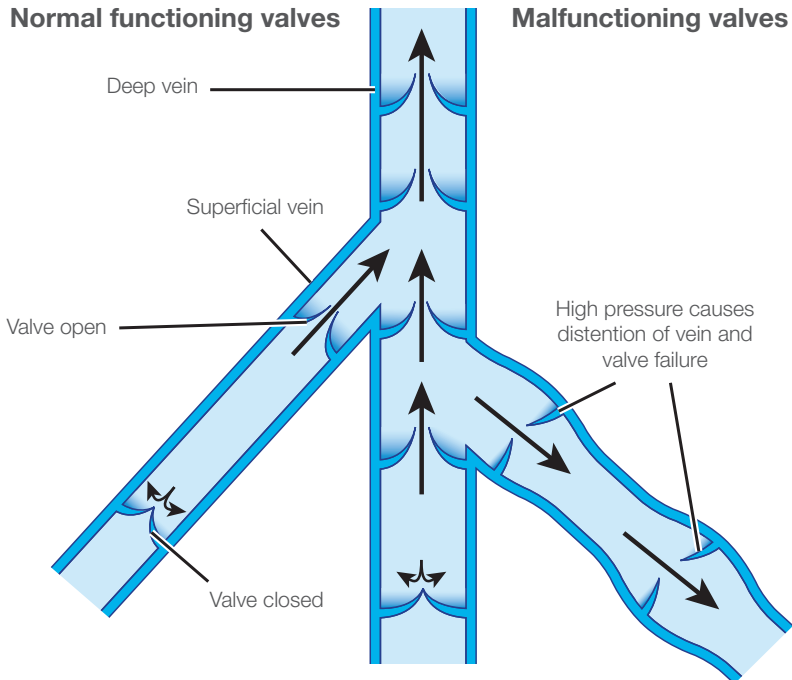
What are varicose veins?

Varicose veins are large, complex and bulging veins under the skin of the legs. They are very common and do not cause problems for most people.

Veins are the vessels that take the blood back to the heart.

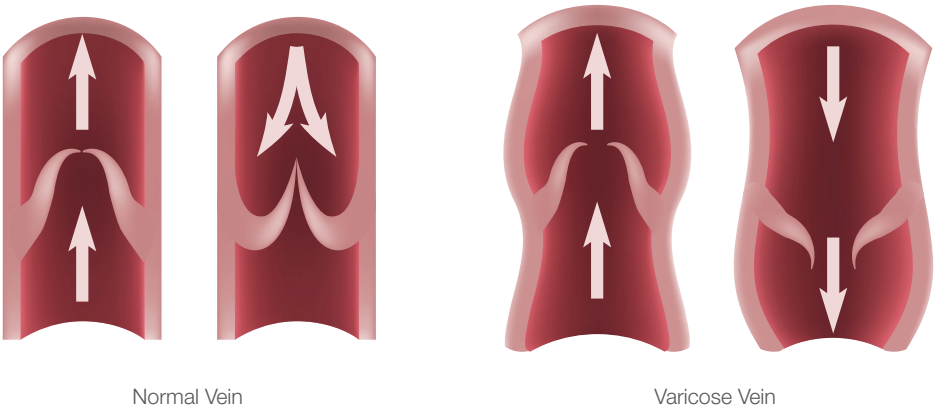
There are two main systems of veins in our legs:

- Deep venous system located between the muscles in the legs and thighs. Such muscles squeeze the deep veins when we walk to pump most of the blood from our legs back to the heart.
- Superficial venous system. This set of veins is located under the skin and mainly on the inner side/back of the leg.



What causes varicose veins?

The veins in the deep and superficial systems have one-way valves that ensure blood flows in one direction from the feet to the heart. Without these valves, blood would flow backwards and cause pressure to build in the veins. This is common when we stand or sit for prolonged periods. Overpressure in the veins widens them and damages valves to cause varicose veins.



Varicose veins are often hereditary (runs in the family) and common in women, but also occur in men. Puberty, pregnancy, menopause, oral contraceptive pills and hormone replacement therapy can also contribute to varicose veins.

In the first trimester, hormonal changes in pregnant women can increase blood volumes and cause veins to enlarge. Varicose veins normally improve three months after delivery, but multiple pregnancies can cause abnormal veins and permanent varicose veins to develop.

Age, obesity, standing for prolonged periods and a history of deep vein thrombosis may also lead to varicose veins.

What are the symptoms?

There are often no symptoms in the early stages but varicose veins usually begin with noticeable superficial veins in the leg.

Symptoms:

- Dull ache or discomfort in the legs, especially at the end of the day
- Heaviness
- Severe pain over bulging veins (phlebitis-inflammation) or bleeding (rare)
- Skin break down
- Some itchiness and skin irritation
- Swelling of legs
- The skin on the leg changes (dry and pigmented skin)
- Ulcer (a break in the skin that forms a wound known as “venous ulcers”)

What investigations are needed?

An ultrasound scan can detect non-functioning valves and the location of abnormal veins or valves that cause a backflow of blood (a symptom known as reflux). Treatment will be advised accordingly.

How are varicose veins treated?

- **Conservative management**

If there are no symptoms or skin changes, compression stockings can help to prevent varicose veins from worsening. Moisturising your legs also reduces the onset of eczema and pigmentation.

- **Surgery**

- Open surgery. This involves tying off (ligating) the main junctions between the deep and superficial veins at the groin or back of the knee, and then removing superficial and obvious varicose veins.

- Minimally-invasive surgery.

This method removes the superficial vein and uses an endovenous technique with Laser treatment (EVLT), Radiofrequency (RFA) or special surgical glue to do so. It can be performed under local anaesthesia and sedation. Laser or Radiofrequency energy heats the main vein from the inside and causes it to seal and eventually disappear. The surgical glue seals the vein walls together. The rest of the varicose veins are removed surgically through very small skin incisions.



What are the risks and complications of surgery?

Occasionally, you may feel a temporary numb sensation in your leg after surgery. In rare cases, deep vein thrombosis (clot in the deep veins) occurs and causes the leg to swell. Other complications include bleeding and infection. Even with surgery, there is a risk of varicose veins returning.

What can I expect after surgery?

After surgery, your leg will be bandaged. Please keep it dry at all times. Some swelling, bruising and discomfort is expected, but painkillers can help to relieve you of any discomfort. Patients who do not require hospitalisation can have their bandage removed two days after surgery. You will be encouraged to walk after surgery.

Once the bandage is removed, please wear a pair of stockings (TEDs) for two weeks. All bruising and swelling should subside approximately two weeks later. You may return to work after a few days. Please continue to wear your stockings. You may resume normal recreational activities two weeks after surgery.

Must I treat varicose veins?

Without treatment, varicose veins can progress into venous ulcers and cause repeated infection in the legs. You can lower your risk by wearing compression stockings or getting a surgery.

For more information

Ng Teng Fong General Hospital and Jurong Community Hospital

1 Jurong East St 21, Singapore 609606

www.ntfgh.com.sg | www.jch.com.sg

Clinic opening hours

Monday – Friday: 8.30am – 5.30pm

Saturday: 8.30am – 12.30pm (Selected clinics only*)

Dental Clinic: Monday – Thursday: 8.00am – 5.30pm, Friday: 8.00am – 5.00pm

*Please refer to our websites for more details.

General enquiries & appointments

General enquiries line: 6908 2222 (24-hr)

Fax: 6716 5500 | Email: contactus@nuhs.edu.sg

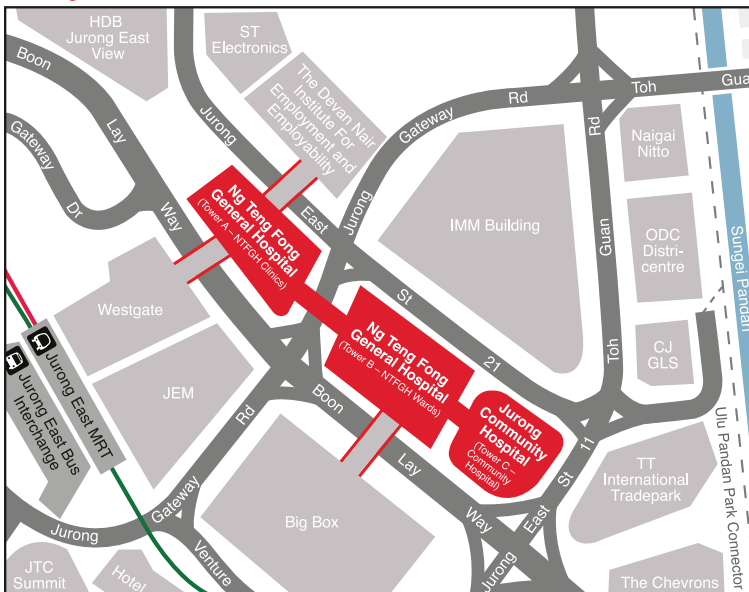
Appointment line: 6908 2222 (Monday – Friday: 8.00am – 5.30pm, Saturday: 8.00am – 12.30pm)

Fax: 6716 2200 | Email: appointment@nuhs.edu.sg

Dental appointment line: 6716 2233 (Monday – Friday: 8.00am – 5.30pm)

Fax: 6716 2200 | Email: JHCampus_Dental@nuhs.edu.sg

Getting there



By train

Alight at Jurong East MRT Station

By bus

Jurong East Bus Interchange

41, 49, 51, 52, 66, 66B, 78, 78A, 79, 79A, 97, 97E, 98, 98M, 105, 143, 143M, 160, 160A, 160M, 183, 183B, 197, 333, 334, 335, 506

Along Boon Lay Way

49, 99, 333, Private bus service 625, 990

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