



**VeinSpecialists**  
OF TAMPA

## **Pre and Post-Operative Instructions for Varicose Vein Patients**

### **who have had an Ambulatory Phlebectomy**

*The following are things we have gone over before, but we are writing them down here for emphasis and clarity. The **FACTS** should provide you with useful information so you know what to expect during your recovery, and they are designed to help speed up your recovery.*

- **DIET:** The day of the procedure you should eat normally before, and after coming to the office. After the procedure, you can eat or drink anything you desire. Take any medications that are part of your normal routine. Blood thinners are usually stopped 24-72 hours before the procedure and will be restarted by the next day.
- **SKIN:**
  - **WOMEN MUST NOT SHAVE THEIR LEGS FOR AT LEAST 24 HOURS PRIOR TO A PROCEDURE.**
  - Oils and lotions make the treatments a little more difficult. **WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU DO NOT APPLY OIL OR LOTION TO YOUR LEGS ON THE DAY OF TREATMENT.**

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#### **1. FACTS: (What to expect):**

- a. **Bruising:** Almost all patients get some bruising after this procedure, but it is surprisingly small. It goes away 100% of the time. I have never seen the bruising cause any problems except its appearance.
- b. **Tenderness, soreness or pain.** All patients get some discomfort after this procedure, but the discomfort is usually mild. While some patients report "no pain" after this procedure, most patients have at least some mild soreness in the area of the phlebectomy.
- c. **Areas that are Lumpy and Bumpy:** The areas under your skin where the veins used to be will be a little hard, lumpy and bumpy. This is simply some inflammation of the tissues from the surgery and the anesthetic. The hardness will all go away with time and it does not require any special treatment. The hardness often takes much longer to resolve than does the mild tenderness you will have in these areas. Normally, the hardness causes no problems by itself, so once the tenderness is gone, the problem is fixed.
- d. **Incisions and Red Stuff (blood) under the dressings.** Your incisions will be covered with Steri-Strips. This will allow you to get in the shower 48 hours after your procedure. You must be aware, however, that a small

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amount of blood will always come out of the incision and will be trapped under the tape. This small drop of blood will get spread around under the tape and as a result, it often looks like more blood than is actually there.

**2. SUGGESTIONS:** These suggestions should help speed your recovery:

- a. **Activity:** Have someone drive you home. You should take a day off from work on the day of your first procedure, but otherwise, you could return to normal activities except for vigorous exercise or running for the first five days, or until I see you back in the office. It is important for you to understand that there is little you can do in the way of physical activity that will cause any serious health problems, undo what we have done, or jeopardize your results. The only thing that you could do to cause any serious problems would be to sit still or lay down for a prolonged period of time right after the procedure. Because of this, we do not want you to go home and go to bed or take a nap right after the procedure, and we do not want you to take a long (more than 2 hours) car drive or plane ride right after the procedure. Common sense is the best guide to your activities. You may shower starting 48 hours after your procedure. Just remember to take off your support stocking and dressings first. The Steri-Strips should stay on and can get wet. They will come off in a period of 1-2 weeks on their own. No hot baths, hot tubs or exposure to marine water (ocean, lakes, rivers, bay or gulf) until seen back in the office – usually 6-8 days post-procedure.
- b. **Support Stockings:** The two reasons we prescribe support stockings after the procedure is to minimize any bruising you might get after the procedure, and to provide you with some additional comfort after the procedure. 48 hours after the procedure, it is important for you to begin wearing your stockings to minimize any bruising. Take the stockings off to shower, and wear them during daytime only. Your first shower should be at **48 hours** after your procedure. After the first two weeks, the effect of the stockings on minimizing your bruising diminishes, and after this, there is probably no significant benefit to wearing the stockings. However, most patients who have left their stockings off before seeing me back in the office for their first visit report increased pain and discomfort a day or so after going without them, and almost all of these patients find relief if they get back into their stockings.
- c. **Pain Control:** Fortunately, pain is not normally a big issue after this procedure. Try over-the-counter pain medications like Tylenol, Advil, Alleve or whatever you normally take for a headache. You can safely double the recommended dosage



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on an over-the-counter pain medication in the first 24 hours, but drink plenty of fluids with them.

If you have tried an over-the-counter pain medication and are still having discomfort or you are still having more pain than you think you should be having, or if you are concerned for any other reason, please call me.

**Gary Dworkin, MD**

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