

How to treat spider and varicose veins

Did you know approximately half the population suffer from varicose veins, spider veins and venous insufficiency? When left untreated, they not only look terrible, but also, will often become the cause of a number of adverse health risks.

Inside our guide you'll find information on the causes and symptoms behind varicose and spider veins. We also discuss the common misconceptions and modern non-surgical treatments available to rid vein diseases with little to no downtime or discomfort.



DR HUGO PIN
VASCULAR + COSMETIC CLINIC

What are Varicose and Spider Veins?

Varicose and spider veins affect a huge portion of the population. Unfortunately, although they affect such a high volume of people, effective and 'best practice' treatment of varicose and spider veins is largely misunderstood.

Veins carry deoxygenated blood back to our heart. In our legs, blood is collected in the superficial veins, just below the skin surface, and delivered to deeper veins which run within our calf muscles. The muscular action of our calves helps to pump the blood against the force of gravity towards the heart. One-way valves inside the veins prevent the blood from travelling backwards.

If these valves fail to close properly, blood pools in the superficial veins. Over time, the affected veins distend with blood (become 'varicose'). Varicose veins are knobbly, twisted and darkish-blue in appearance.

Spider veins are like varicose veins, but smaller and closer to the surface of the skin. They are often red or blue, and can look like tree branches or spider webs. They are mostly found on a person's legs or face. They may cover a small or large area.



What are Varicose and Spider Veins?

The specific causes of varicose and spider veins are not known. However, in many cases, they run in families, and women do seem to suffer from them more often than men. While there are no known specific causes, there are a number of factors which predispose a person to varicose and spider veins. Some of these include:

- Occupations which involve a lot of standing – nurses, hairdressers, teachers, certain factory workers etc.
- Genetics
- Obesity
- Postmenopausal hormone replacement therapies
- A history of blood clots
- Use of birth control pills

Some other causes may include conditions which cause increased pressure in the abdomen, trauma or injury to the skin, previous vein surgery or exposure to ultraviolet rays.

Treatment of varicose veins and spider veins is not just for cosmetic reasons. Varicose vein disease can cause many health problems, such as blood clots, venous eczema, skin breakdown and ulceration, and, rarely, skin cancers.

There are a range of modern technologies and techniques available to treat varicose and spider.

Symptoms of varicose and spider veins

Many people with varicose veins suffer pain, aching or cramping of the legs. Other common symptoms reported by sufferers include tiredness, restlessness, throbbing, burning, tingling, or heaviness in the legs.

Once manifested, spider and varicose veins become visible as recognisable jagged purple lines or swollen bluish cords spreading predominately across thighs and calves.



Why you should consider treating Varicose and Spider Veins.

Perhaps the biggest misconception surrounding the treatment of varicose and spider veins is the belief that treatment is only performed for cosmetic purposes.

Varicose veins develop because of an underlying problem with the venous valves which keep blood from flowing in the wrong direction. When left untreated, varicose veins can lead to many debilitating symptoms, including: swelling in the leg, venous eczema, discolouration of skin, hardening of the lower leg and ankle, and ulceration.

Varicose and spider veins can also signal a range of long-term adverse health risks including: deep vein thrombosis and blood clots.

Modern technologies and techniques

No scars, no cutting and very little downtime; advanced procedures and emerging technologies have dramatically improved the process of vein removal.

These new technologies allow practitioners to remove varicose and spider veins, with high levels of success, through minimally invasive, non-surgical procedures.

The key also lies in using duplex ultrasound to completely map out the size and location of all diseased veins - many of which are beneath the skin and not visible. Ultrasound is then used to accurately and thoroughly treat the varicose veins. By being able to see these hidden diseased veins, one can eliminate the root cause and prevent most recurrences. No procedure, however, can prevent new veins from forming.

What was once a long and largely ineffective procedure can now be completed with minimal to no downtime, and without any required hospital stay.



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How to treat varicose and spider veins.

There are a range of available treatments to address concerns associated with varicose and spider veins.

Both spider veins and varicose veins can easily be eliminated through sclerotherapy, laser ablation or microphlebectomy. New technology and modern sclerotherapy techniques mean patients do not require hospital admission or general anaesthetic.

Upon seeing the great results and realising how easy the process is, many patients often wonder why they waited so long to eliminate their veins.

New guidelines and regulations

In 2013, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), based in the UK, established new guidelines for the appropriate treatment of varicose veins in the legs. In 2014, this was followed with a management pathway.

Though the introduction of these guidelines are long overdue, it is pleasing to see we are finally recognising the latest endovenous laser techniques as the most suitable options for treatment of varicose veins.

The guidelines promote three key recommendations:

- All patients with varicose veins and symptoms should be referred to a *vascular service
- Assessment should include full colour duplex ultrasound scanning
- Treatment should be by endovenous thermal ablation. If this is not possible, foam sclerotherapy is the next option. Surgery should only be undertaken if both of these treatments are not available. In expert experienced hands, surgery is, in fact, never required.

*We discuss the term vascular service on the following page.



A word from Dr. Hugo Pin

At Sunshine Vein Clinic, we have been offering the latest vein removal techniques and treatments with an extremely high volume of success since opening our doors in 2012. We were the first company on the Sunshine Coast to offer endovenous laser treatment.

New guidelines now state that any patients suffering from the effects of varicose veins should be referred to a vascular service.

What is a vascular service?

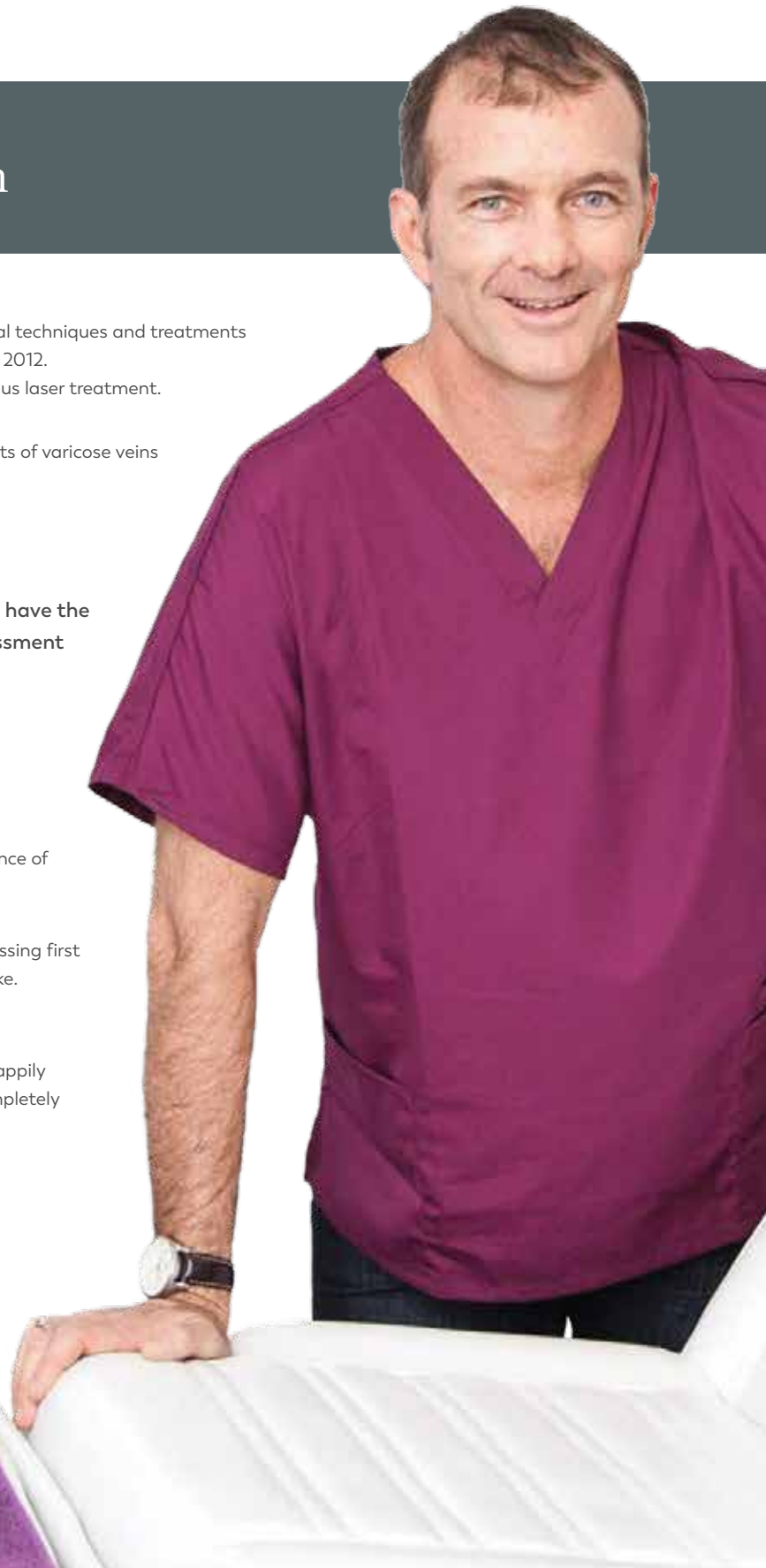
A vascular service is a team of healthcare professionals who have the skills to undertake a full clinical and duplex ultrasound assessment and provide a full range of treatment.

This is precisely what we have at Sunshine Vein Clinic.

It's disheartening to know many people still live with and suffer from the effects of varicose and spider veins, simply because they are not aware of just how easy and successful the process is under the guidance of an experienced practitioner.

I have personally completed over 4000 successful procedures, witnessing first hand the incredible transformations such a small procedure can make.

Many GPs still have no idea on how to correctly and efficiently treat veins, and continue to refer patients to vascular surgeons who will happily remove veins under general anaesthesia which, in most cases, is completely unnecessary.



Ultrasound integration.

Much of the misunderstanding surrounding the most effective treatment of varicose veins lies within the assessment process. As stated in the recent guidelines:

- Assessment should include full colour duplex ultrasound scanning.

What is duplex ultrasound scanning?

Duplex ultrasound scanning allows an experienced practitioner to identify all abnormalities and assess their importance and relevance to the patient's unique condition. For the patient, this means avoiding over-treatment, reducing costs, and providing an overall more effective end result.

Importance of experience

The truth is, many doctors and surgeons who provide newer endovenous ablation have no prior experience or formal training in ultrasound, forcing them to rely on sonographers and radiologists to undertake the scanning for them.

This is not the best way to plan treatment.

In our view it is far better for the person undertaking the treatment to also undertake the scan so they have a perfect picture in their head of what the scan shows. To rely on a written report from a third person when planning treatment is less than ideal as judgments need to be made regarding the relevance of what is detected on the scan.

The involvement of sonographers is even more intriguing! Some doctors without a natural background in ultrasound scanning and its use in guiding interventions also use sonographers to guide them during the procedures. The sonographer holds the ultrasound probe and the surgeon places the needle. This is not only highly inefficient (two persons rather than one to do one task) but also illogical.

Dr Hugo Pin

Dr Hugo Pin is deeply experienced in all aspects of ultrasound scanning and technology. Long before the convergence of ultrasound technology with endovenous vein treatment, Dr Pin trained extensively to become fully qualified in clinical ultrasound diagnosis.

This extensive experience allows Dr Pin to stand ahead of the field in the treatment of varicose and spider veins through ultrasound technology.

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Payment and medical coverage.

It is a shame, that in Australia, we are still largely ignoring new guidelines on the most effective treatment of varicose veins. Medicare and insurance companies cover some traditional, out dated stripping procedures and surgeries, which should only be used as a very last option.

Having said this, the price of treatment still presents as insignificant when compared with the benefits achieved through such a simple and effective treatment.

- Private Health only covers inpatient procedures.
- Some Medicare rebates apply if the vein diameter is more than 2.5 mm, which is the case all the time for varicose veins.
- Medicare rebates apply of 1 procedure only per day, which means it will not pay for laser + another treatment the same day. Every vein specialist knows that the more you can do at the same time, the better the outcome.
- We now accept payment plans with Zip Money and Zip Pay.
- You can arrange a credit facility in a few hours with Total Lifestyle Credit.

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Treatments and prices.

It is hard to determine the most appropriate treatment and cost of treatment without proper consultation.

Dr Hugo Pin is deeply experienced in the treatment of varicose and spider veins, and upon short consultation can provide a very accurate description of the best treatment, or combination of treatments to address your unique case.

At Sunshine Vein Clinic, we strive to remain as transparent as possible when it comes to treatment costs and recommendations. We want to provide patients with the most detailed information to help them make an informed decision.

Here is the breakdown of common treatments we provide and their associated costs. We go into further detail about the treatments on the following pages.

- Endovenous Laser 1 leg: \$3000 including sclerotherapy and / or avulsion of varicosities the same day. (For 2 legs: \$4500).
- Initial Follow up after laser; including Ultrasound Guided Foam sclerotherapy (3-4 weeks after first procedure): \$450
- Ultrasound Guided Foam sclerotherapy or avulsion of varicosities as primary treatment: from \$1300 to \$2100 per leg.
- Ultrasound Guided Foam sclerotherapy 1 leg as primary treatment: \$950
- Thread veins treatment: \$440 per session (35-45 min)
- Clarivein 1 leg: \$3500

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Endovenous Laser Treatment.

About the procedure

Endovenous means the treatment is performed 'within the vein'. Instead of removing the vein, endovenous laser treatment involves permanently sealing and closing it in place.

During treatment the skin on the back of the knee is anaesthetised, and a small laser fibre is inserted into the damaged vein. Pulses of light are administered into the vein and damage the walls, which causes the vein to collapse and seal shut.

What to expect

Endovenous laser treatment is performed in-office under local anaesthesia.

The anaesthetic not only allows the procedure to be performed safely and painlessly, it also offers a range of benefits for the rest of the treatment. The anaesthetic that is located around the vein causes it to spasm and shrink down onto the laser so that it is in very close contact with the laser fibre. The anaesthetic also absorbs the residual heat from the laser which prevents thermal damage to the surrounding tissue.

Following the procedure a bandage or compression hose is placed on the treated leg. Patients are able to walk immediately after the procedure, and most individuals are able to return to work the next day. Endovenous laser treatment is approved for the treatment of the greater saphenous vein.

Duration of procedure

The procedure takes approximately an hour to perform and the patient can usually return to their regular activities on the same day.

Cost of treatment

Endovenous laser treatment is often used in conjunction with other techniques like ultrasound guided sclerotherapy or micro-phlebectomy. The first session generally lasts about 1 hour and requires subsequent visits.

Costs start at \$2500 per leg for laser and local anaesthesia, and around \$3000 if you need phlebectomy as well. Medicare rebates do apply for this treatment. Please get in contact with us to confirm any further details.

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Microsclerotherapy.

About the procedure

This virtually painless treatment, which has been successfully performed for decades, involves injecting a solution through a micro-needle into the protruding thread veins, causing them to gradually fade.

This solution causes swelling in the vein's wall, which injures the cells in the lining of the vein and triggers the natural healing process. If the vein is treated correctly, this healing will cause the vein to fade and disappear during the weeks following treatment.

What to expect

Due to the extremely small diameter of the needle, and the gentle technique involved, there is generally little discomfort only experienced during the entire treatment.

Duration of procedure

Circumstances differ from patient to patient, meaning some patients may require more treatments than others depending on the severity of the veins and how the body responds to the treatment. Treatment should last less than an hour, whilst veins may need to undergo treatment more than once depending on their size. Typically, there is little to no downtime after the treatment and patients can return to their daily life immediately.

Cost of treatment

The cost per session is \$440. Most patients will require at least three sessions. The treatment can be used to treat one or two legs depending on the severity of the case. There is no rebate from Medicare as it is considered to be purely cosmetic most of the time.

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Ultrasound Guided Sclerotherapy .

About the procedure

Ultrasound guided sclerotherapy (UGS) uses special ultrasound equipment to guide injections of a sclerosant solution, which closes the abnormal varicose vein by washing away the lining of the vein allowing the two walls to stick together. This dramatically reduces the size and appearance of the varicose vein. It can be used for visible varicose veins and for spider veins or thread veins.

What to expect

UGS can be used to inject the part of the varicose vein that is not visible on the surface, which has led to the ability to close veins permanently. While results have shown there is a reasonably high success rate with one treatment, some patients require repeat treatments at a later date.

UGS treatments are generally quick and virtually painless.

Duration of procedure

This treatment will usually take about 30 minutes and you should be able to return to work the following day. This differs from case to case, so discuss this with Dr Hugo Pin. It is also very important that you walk for approximately half an hour every day following the treatment, as this will reduce the pressure in the veins and reduce the risk of deep vein thrombosis.

Cost of treatment

Patients generally require two sessions per leg. The cost per session varies between \$650 and \$950.

Additional treatments.

At Sunshine Vein Clinic, we pride ourselves on offering the widest and most efficient range of vein removal treatments and technologies available. In addition to the already listed treatments, we also offer the following innovative treatments.

Vein Gogh Thermolysis

We are the only clinic in Queensland to provide this revolutionary treatment. The Vein Gogh Thermolysis System provides a superior solution for the treatment of fine telangiectasia, spider veins and small angiomas that have shown a resistance to sclerotherapy, laser or IPL treatment. Vein Gogh is the fast, easy way to reliably treat these and other cosmetically unacceptable conditions, often with less discomfort compared to older therapies.

The Vein Gogh treatment is usually appropriate for most patients who are in good health and are looking for a procedure that is fast and has no downtime. To find out if you are an appropriate candidate, you can arrange a consultation at our Sunshine Coast clinic.

[Read more](#)

ClariVein

ClariVein treats incompetent veins (veins that make blood stagnant or flow back toward the feet, and can cause clots and varicose vein phlebitis from the pressure) as well as varicose veins. Studies have shown that ClariVein is not only simpler and faster, but it has also been shown to be as much as 74% less painful than other minimally invasive treatments.

One of the reasons for this is that ClariVein doesn't use thermal energy and there's no need for a plethora of anaesthetic injections.

[Read more](#)



Your procedure.

We offer a range of non-surgical and minimally invasive vein treatment procedures at our beautiful Sunshine Coast practice to reduce the appearance of spider veins and restore your self-esteem.

If you have any further questions about any of the information or treatments mentioned in this guide, please don't hesitate to get in contact with us.

If you'd like to book in for a consultation, you can do so on our website, or by calling us directly.

FIRST CONSULTATION

Book in your first consultation with Dr Hugo Pin visit:

sunshineveinclinic.com.au

Phone to book on

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Before and after photos.



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