

COMPREHENSIVE VEIN CARE AT UAB VEIN PROGRAM

Offering comprehensive evaluation, specialized treatment, and compassionate care for the health of your veins.

More than 80 million Americans suffer from some form of venous disease, from spider and varicose veins, venous thromboembolism, and chronic venous insufficiency to more complex venous problems. Some aren't even aware that such disorders exist, and others are reluctant to seek treatment for fear that it would be difficult, invasive, and painful.

The UAB Vein Program and UAB Vein Clinic offer convenient treatment and comprehensive care from doctors who specialize

in vein diseases, surgery, and wound care. Both outpatient and inpatient treatment settings are available at the UAB Vein Clinic and UAB Hospital, giving patients access to specialized care and all of the new and less invasive technology that a world-class hospital and academic center have to offer.

Inside, learn more about the problems that could affect your veins and the treatment options available through the UAB Vein Program.



UAB VEIN PROGRAM

*Expert care for the health
of your veins*

UAB
Vein Clinic
located at UAB Highlands

Section of Vascular Surgery
and Endovascular Therapy
University of Alabama at Birmingham
1201 11th Avenue South
Birmingham, AL 35205-3410

205.996.VEIN (8346)
uabhealth.org/vein

UAB
Vein Clinic
located at UAB Highlands

VARICOSE AND SPIDER VEINS

Varicose and spider veins occur when blood returning to the heart pools inside a vein, causing congestion and enlargement of the vein. Varicose veins are swollen, dark purple or blue, and often look like large ropes or a cluster of grapes. Spider veins are small, threadlike veins that resemble a spider web and lie close to the skin. In many cases, varicose and spider veins cause no symptoms but look unattractive. However, they can become painful with complaints of aching, burning, itching, or throbbing in the veins or the development of heaviness, tiredness, cramping, or swelling in the leg.

A thorough exam of the legs, including an ultrasound, by a vein specialist will confirm the diagnosis of varicose or spider veins. Since most varicose and spider veins pose no serious health risk, treatments are generally aimed at eliminating the unsightly appearance of the veins and improving symptoms. While compression stockings offer some improvement of symptoms, there are effective outpatient treatment options available to remove affected veins:

- Sclerotherapy – injection therapy that will cause spider or small varicose veins to collapse and fade
- Surface laser treatment – for spider veins
- Phlebectomy – removal of varicose veins through tiny incisions
- Endovenous ablation – obliteration of larger veins with radio frequency or lasers placed inside the vein
- Transilluminated powered phlebectomy – removal of varicose veins with scopes

For more severe varicose vein problems, surgical options are also available. Evaluation by a doctor who specializes in vein surgery can determine which of these options is right for you.



VEIN THROMBOSIS/DVT/PE

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is a blood clot that develops in a deep vein, usually in the lower leg. When DVT is not diagnosed and treated, the clot can break loose and travel to the lungs, causing a pulmonary embolism (PE). A simple ultrasound can diagnose DVT, and effective treatment can significantly reduce the risk of fatal PE.

The best treatment option is prevention by risk factor identification and increased awareness. Risk factors include advanced age, family history, prior clotting episodes, hormonal changes, malignancy, obesity, prolonged immobility during travel, serious injury, and surgery or other hospitalizations.

It is important to identify individuals with those risk factors, as preventive measures can be taken to avoid DVT and PE in high-risk situations. When DVT or PE does occur, treatment options can include:

- Anticoagulation – blood clot prevention medication
- Thrombolytic therapy – clot-dissolving medication
- Thrombectomy – clot removal
- Vena cava filter placement – filter to prevent clot traveling to lungs

For treatment and preventive considerations, evaluation by a doctor who specializes in vein clotting diseases is recommended.

CHRONIC VENOUS INSUFFICIENCY – VENOUS WOUND

To return blood to the heart from the legs, veins rely on a series of delicate one-way valves that prevent backflow of blood (venous reflux). When vein valves fail, are damaged, or are blocked by clots, pooling of blood in the legs can occur. This is called “chronic venous insufficiency.” Symptoms associated with chronic venous insufficiency include heaviness, tiredness, aching, burning, itching, throbbing, or cramping of the legs. Examination of the lower legs may reveal:

- Edema – accumulation of fluid
- Varicose veins – dilated, thickened vessels
- Stasis dermatitis – skin redness and inflammation
- Venous eczema – dry, flaking skin
- Hyperpigmentation – brownish skin discoloration
- Lipodermatosclerosis – scarring of the skin around the ankle
- Venous stasis ulcers – crater-like lesions around the ankles caused by reduced blood flow; once these ulcers develop, they can be very difficult to heal

With appropriate care from a doctor who specializes in vein diseases and wound care, these conditions will usually resolve. With early diagnosis, most cases of chronic venous insufficiency can be managed with treatments as simple as compression stockings. In some cases, surgery or other interventional procedures may help to improve venous function, relieve symptoms, and prevent venous ulcerations. Today, newer and less invasive treatments are available to treat chronic venous insufficiency.

COMPLEX VENOUS PROBLEMS

While many venous diseases occur commonly and are fairly simple to treat, some represent complex problems that require comprehensive and coordinated specialty care. These include advanced clotting problems, severe chronic venous insufficiency, venous stasis ulcers, venous thoracic outlet syndrome, congenital venous malformations, and vein tumors, among others. The UAB Vein Program provides outpatient care and inpatient services that may be required for more advanced problems. Regardless of the complexity of the problem, comprehensive care by a vein disease specialist is available through the UAB Vein Program and UAB Vein Clinic.

LEARN MORE ABOUT UAB VEIN PROGRAM

The UAB Vein Program incorporates the outpatient care available at the UAB Vein Clinic with the inpatient services that may be required for more advanced problems at UAB Hospital. The Program offers comprehensive evaluation and treatment by doctors who specialize in vein diseases.

For more information or to schedule an appointment with one of our expert physicians, call **(205) 996-8346** or visit our Web site at uabhealth.org/vein.

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