

#### **WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER EVLT:**

*Endovenous laser ablation* treats the hidden “root source” of visible varicose veins via a laser catheter placed inside the vein. As the laser catheter is withdrawn the vein is sealed shut by the laser energy. The procedure lasts 20-30 minutes and is performed under local anesthetic.

*Most but not all* of the soreness of the vein treated with EVLT will be gone after 1-2 weeks. After the EVLT you will be put in a compression stocking and begun on an anti-inflammatory medication for one week. At the end of the week you may discontinue both. If, *any time after stopping the anti-inflammatory medication and stocking*, the leg begins to feel very sore again *resume wearing the stocking and restart the anti-inflammatory medication for another 3-5 days*. Then try to discontinue them again. Occasional soreness in treated veins is common as the vein continues to fibrose.

Remember that most patients *will not see* a great difference in the appearance of their varicose veins immediately after EVLT. This is normal because there are still many varicose veins that are too narrow or twisted for an endovenous catheter to pass through. These will be treated later with microphlebectomy and/or ultrasound guided foam sclerotherapy. After your EVLT you will be scheduled to come back soon after to make certain that the vein treated with laser is closed and to plan how soon to start the next phase of your treatment.

#### **WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER MICROPHLECTOMY:**

Patients with very prominent bulging veins will under go microphlebectomy after the “root source” of the veins has first been treated with endovenous laser ablation. The procedure lasts about 45 minutes. After local anesthetic a needle puncture is made next to bulging veins through which a small “knitting hook” device extracts the vein. Steri strips are placed and a bandage over the leg is worn for 2-3 days. You will sponge bathe the leg until the bandage is off. Most, if not all, the bulging veins will be gone then. There will be bruising and firm lumps which will smooth out as the leg continues to heal.

#### **WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER ULTRASOUND GUIDED FOAM SCLEROTHERAPY:**

Ultrasound guided sclerotherapy addresses other refluxing varicose veins that often can not be seen without ultrasound. Treatment of these veins is important for symptom relief and to prevent recurrence of other visible varicose veins.

Most patients will have two ultrasound guided treatments after the EVLT. These are typically one and two months after the EVLT. Occasionally, a third treatment is required. After the ultrasound guided foam sclerotherapy you will be asked to elevate your legs at home for several hours and then resume your normal activities. Stockings will be worn for two weeks after each treatment.

Shortly after the second ultrasound guided foam sclerotherapy the varicose veins will begin to disappear though you can still feel them. The veins can sometimes be felt as lumps and cords beneath the skin for many weeks afterwards but will ultimately disappear altogether. Veins that lay over bony prominences such as the knee or shin take longer to disappear from sight.

Many patients will develop a temporary brownish discoloration over where treated veins once were. Patients with a dark complexion or who tan easily are more likely to hyperpigment in this way. If needed you will be given a bleaching cream to help this clear more quickly.

All patients will have their legs checked 6 months after finishing treatment. This is important to make certain that veins have completely fibrosed. If there are any small tracts remaining you will be given a final “booster dose” of sclerotherapy. These may be present even when your legs feel well and there is no evidence of visible varicose veins.

The treatment described above is considered medically necessary by most insurances and treatment is covered by insurance. Spider veins are not considered medically necessary by any insurance. The treatment described above will only slightly improve the appearance of spider veins. If after treatment of large varicose vein disease you desire treatment of more cosmetic spider veins speak with Dr. Douglass.