Varicose and spider veins fact sheet

What are varicose veins & spider veins?
Varicose veins are abnormally dilated blood vessels that look like cords and appear twisted and bulging. They can cause pain and disfigurement. They’re blue, red or flesh-colored and often found on the thighs, backs of calves or the inside of the legs. Spider veins are smaller and closer to the skin’s surface. Appearing red or blue, they look like spider webs with short, jagged lines. They occur on the legs and face.

What causes them?
Varicose veins can be caused by weak or damaged valves in the veins. Veins carry blood to the heart and their valves act as one-way flaps to prevent blood from flowing backwards as it moves up the leg. Weak valves cause blood to leak back into the veins, collect there and get bigger as they become varicose. Varicose veins affect half of the people 50 and older. Spider veins can be caused by blood backing up, hormone changes, sun exposure and injuries.

Am I at risk for varicose veins & spider veins?
Several factors increase your risk of developing varicose veins including age, medical history, hormonal changes, pregnancy, obesity, lack of movement and sun exposure.

What are the symptoms?
Common symptoms in the legs include:
• Aching pains that increase with sitting or standing for a long time
• Throbbing or cramping
• Heaviness or swelling
• Itchy rash
• Darkening of the skin
• Restless legs

Are they dangerous?
Spider veins rarely are dangerous, but can cause discomfort in the legs. Varicose veins, in some cases, can lead to more serious health problems including sores or skin ulcers, bleeding, superficial thrombophlebitis (blood clots) or deep vein thrombosis (DVT).

Should I see a doctor?
It’s important to talk to your doctor about risk factors if you see or suspect varicose veins. There are steps you can take to keep them from getting worse. Seek medical attention for sudden inflammation, pain, bleeding or discoloration.

How are they treated?
Lifestyle changes or compression stockings can help in mild cases. If symptoms are more severe, effective medical treatments are available. The latest procedures use endovenous laser therapies, radio frequency ablation or sclerotherapy to destroy or block the abnormal veins, relieving pain and disfigurement. Most treatments are now done in the doctor’s office.

What’s the next step?
If you thought vein problems were something that you just had to live with, think again. Marshfield Clinic Vein Services features experienced physicians using advanced lasers and other less invasive ways to make spider veins and varicose veins disappear. Talk to the vein specialists at Marshfield Clinic and discover your options today.

www.makeachangetoday.org
Locations
Marshfield Clinic Vein Services

Marshfield Clinic Chippewa Falls Center
2655 County Hwy. I, Chippewa Falls, WI 54729
715-726-4200 or 1-800-334-4535

Marshfield Clinic Eau Claire Center
2116 Craig Rd., Eau Claire, WI 54701
1-877-903-VEIN (1-877-903-8346)
or 715-858-4844

Marshfield Clinic Marshfield Center
1000 N. Oak Ave., Marshfield, WI 54449
1-877-MC-VEINS (1-877-628-3467)
or 715-387-9220

Marshfield Clinic Merrill Center
1205 O’Day St., Merrill, WI
1-877-MC-VEINS (1-877-628-3467)
or 715-539-0101

Marshfield Clinic Minocqua Center
9601 Townline Rd., Minocqua, WI 54548
1-877-MC-VEINS (1-877-628-3467)
or 715-358-1221

Marshfield Clinic Rice Lake Center
1700 W. Stout St., Rice Lake, WI 54868
1-877-MC-VEINS (1-877-628-3467)
or 715-236-8176

Marshfield Clinic Wausau Center
2727 Plaza Dr., Wausau, WI 54401
1-877-MC-VEINS (1-877-628-3467)
or 715-847-3241

Marshfield Clinic Weston Center
3501 Cranberry Blvd., Weston, WI 54476
1-877-MC-VEINS (1-877-628-3467)
or 715-393-3241

Marshfield Clinic at Howard Young Medical Center
240 Maple St., Woodruff, WI 54468
1-800-347-0673 or 715-358-1221

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