

Medical
atters

The truth about varicose veins



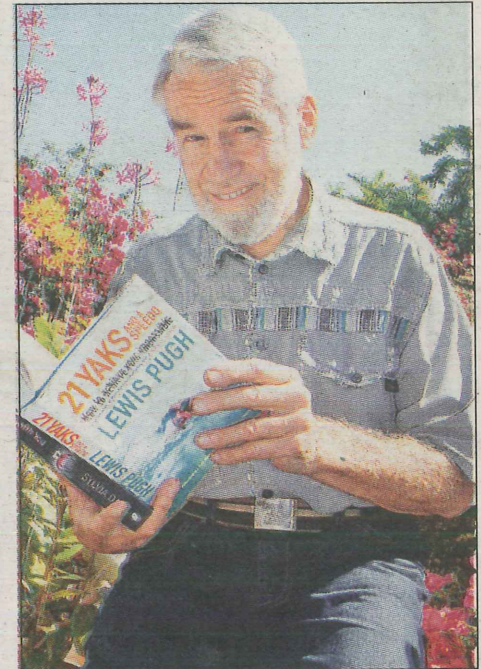
A common problem, varicose veins affect three in 10 people, usually between the ages of 30 and 70. In some cases, varicose veins do not cause much harm and are merely an aesthetic problem.

However, many people experience extreme discomfort as a result of varicose veins such as leg pain, swollen ankles and feet, itching, heavy legs and tired and aching legs. More severe symptoms include poor circulation, skin changes like darkening around the ankles, chronic inflammation, dry, scaling skin, leg swelling and calf pain.

Treatment

Stripping the veins is no longer the only treatment for varicose veins. "Stripping is a harsh surgery on both the patient and surgeon. The endovenous radio-frequency ablation (RFA) is a far more refined and much less painful procedure," says Dr Blignaut, specialist surgeon (M.B.,Ch.B LMCC FCS(SA))who has a special interest in minimally invasive surgery in the management of venous disorders.

"Patients with varicose veins need to undergo a duplex scan to assess for venous reflux in the superficial veins. If this is present, they are a candidate for an RFA," says Blignaut. A safe procedure, RFA is a permanent treatment for varicose veins with results being very effective.



Rod Morgan accepted the books on behalf of his wife Christina who was the winner of June's book competition. Christina said she was very excited to tuck into her copies of Lewis Pugh's 21 Yaks and A Speedo and Entwined With You by Sylvia Day. The books were courtesy of Exclusive Books, Westville.

Lauren Calder
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Post RFA procedure care
Patients may resume their normal activities the next day. Blignaut advises: "Walk every day. Walking and exercising is a great way to keep your veins healthy. Standing for long periods of time will worsen any vein problem."

The RFA procedure
The procedure takes 30 - 60 minutes and is done under local anesthesia. "This means virtually no down time for the patient and is far more convenient. About 10% of patients require a light sedation while I perform the RFA," says Blignaut.
During the procedure, a small catheter is inserted into the saphenous (large superficial vein in the leg) vein, this catheter then heats up and ablates the vein. The vein is sealed and bloodflow rerouted through other healthy veins.

Diary Dates

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