

# ClariVein® treatment for varicose veins

**i** Information for patients  
Sheffield Vascular Institute



**PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST



You have been given this leaflet because you may be considering having a treatment called Clarivein to treat your varicose veins. This leaflet explains more about Clarivein and answers some of the most frequently asked questions. If, after reading this leaflet, you have any questions or concerns, you should write them down and discuss them at your next appointment.

## **Where will my hospital appointments take place?**

Your appointments will be at the Sheffield Vascular Institute; however we also run vascular clinics at Barnsley and Rotherham Hospitals so your initial appointment may take place there. Your treatment will take place at the Bev Stokes Day Surgery Unit at the Northern General Hospital.

Sheffield Vascular Institute is a large vascular centre specialising in the treatment of all circulatory conditions affecting the arteries, veins and lymphatics. If you wish to find out more about the Sheffield Vascular Institute, please look under the 'Guide to Services' section of the Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust website:

- **[www.sth.nhs.uk](http://www.sth.nhs.uk)**

## **What is Clarivein?**

Clarivein is an alternative treatment for varicose veins. It causes the treated veins to seal up, so they no longer allow reflux or reverse blood flow to the varicose veins. This leads to symptoms improving and the varicose veins shrinking, although they may not completely disappear.

A special catheter (thin tube) is inserted directly into the vein. Once inserted, the catheter has a rotating tip which damages the lining of the affected vein. A drug is also released that covers the inside of the vein. The combination of these two actions causes the vein to seal up and eventually close.

One of the major benefits of this treatment is that it is quick and people can get back to usual activities on the same day. The procedure causes very minimal discomfort and bruising. It can also be done with just one injection of local anesthetic, rather than needing a general anesthetic for the surgical removal of the veins, or a number of injections as required for laser treatment.

## **How effective is it?**

Clarivein is a new way of treating varicose veins and so less long term data is available compared to the other forms of treatment available for varicose veins. Despite this, the early data we have indicates that it is an excellent method of treating varicose veins which compares well with other forms of treatment and has similar success rates to laser or surgical removal of varicose veins.

## **Why do I need this treatment?**

You and your specialist have agreed that Clarivein treatment of your varicose veins is the best option for you.

## **Are there any other options?**

Other treatment options include: no treatment, compression stockings, laser treatment, surgery or injections into the varicose veins (sclerotherapy).

## **Will I need any tests first?**

Yes, you will need to have a scan of the veins in your leg. This is a painless test known as a Duplex scan. The scan is performed in the ultrasound department, and for most patients the surgeon performs a further scan within the outpatient department as well. These tests help to ensure your veins are suitable for Clarivein treatment.

## **Am I suitable for this treatment?**

Any patient with varicose veins due to reflux (backward flow of blood) in the long saphenous vein in the thigh, or the short saphenous vein in the calf, is likely to be suitable. This amounts to 70-80% of patients with varicose veins.

If you need more than one vein trunk to be treated by Clarivein, this will usually involve having procedures done in several stages as there is a limit to the amount of the drug that can be used on each occasion.

Your ultrasound scans may show that your varicose veins are not suitable for Clarivein. Most often this is because the vein is excessively tortuous (twisted) or superficial thrombophlebitis (inflammation of the vein) is found.

Please note that once surgery has been agreed, your operation will be performed by any one of the vascular surgeons, to avoid lengthy waiting times.

## **How long will I need to be in hospital?**

You will be in hospital for less than half a day. The procedure takes approximately 20 minutes. You will be able to walk as soon as the procedure is completed and a compression stocking has been applied. We advise that you have someone take you home after the procedure in case you have discomfort in the leg, but it is acceptable for you to get home on your own, even if this is by driving yourself as long as you are pain-free.

You do not need to fast before your procedure as local anesthetic is used.

## **What do I need to bring with me?**

Please bring with you a dressing gown (to wear over your theatre gown) and a pair of slippers. You may also wish to bring a book or magazine to read while you are waiting. We recommend that you do not wear tight fitting trousers on the day of your treatment.

## **What will happen when I come into hospital?**

You will be admitted by the nursing staff in the Day Surgery Unit. A theatre checklist is completed and you will change into a theatre gown before your treatment. You will also be measured for a compression stocking which is usually placed onto your leg after the treatment.

The surgeon will discuss the procedure with you and you will need to sign your consent form. We must seek your consent for any procedure beforehand. Staff will explain the risks, benefits and alternatives where relevant before they ask you to sign your consent. If you are unsure about any aspect of the procedure, please do not hesitate to ask for more information.

## **How is the treatment done?**

Before the treatment begins the surgeon will use an ultrasound machine to identify the vein which needs treating. You will be positioned on your front or back depending upon where the veins are.

An injection of local anesthetic is given to numb the area being treated. When the area is numb the surgeon will make a small puncture hole to gain access to the vein which needs treatment. The Clarivein catheter is carefully guided into the vein and an ultrasound machine is used to ensure it is in the correct position, at the top of the vein which needs treating.

Once the catheter is in the correct position the rotating tip of the catheter is set in motion, which damages the lining of the vein. At the

same time a drug (sclerosant) is sprayed from the catheter. The catheter is pulled back along the vein, so the whole vein is treated.

Once the treatment has finished the catheter is withdrawn. Light pressure will be applied to ensure there is no bleeding from the puncture site.

## **What happens after the procedure?**

Once your treatment has been completed you will be offered a drink and light snack. Your observations will be checked. Providing you are feeling well, you will be allowed to get dressed and go home.

## **Will I have any pain?**

Clarivein is a virtually pain free procedure, so you should only experience minimal discomfort during and after the treatment. Patients are often aware of a painless vibrating or buzzing sensation in the leg. On some occasions there may be momentary periods of pain, but this usually resolves very quickly.

## **Are there any risks with this procedure?**

Some bruising may occur after Clarivein treatment but this is uncommon.

There is a small risk of deep vein thrombosis (DVT) which is the formation of a clot in the major veins of the leg, or of pulmonary embolism which is movement of a clot to the lungs.

The actual incidence of these problems is extremely rare.

As with all procedures there is a risk that the treatment will not be a success, and that the treated vein will not be closed off as intended, or that the varicose veins may come back at a later stage. Although your varicose veins will be expected to shrink, they may persist and require further treatment at a later stage. Most often, this will be by simple

injections into the veins (sclerotherapy) but surgical removal of the varicose veins may sometimes be needed.

## **How long before I can resume normal activities?**

You should resume normal activity immediately after your treatment.

## **What are the advantages of Clarivein treatment?**

- No general anesthesia is required.
- Only one injection of local anesthetic is needed.
- No cuts are made in the leg, just a small puncture hole.
- The procedure is virtually pain free.
- Time to return to normal activity is almost immediate and you can return to work on the same day.

## **Will I need to come back to hospital for a check-up?**

You will be sent an appointment to see the surgeon in clinic around 6-8 weeks after your procedure.

## **Is there any travel advice that I need to be aware of?**

For one month after your surgery we recommend that you do not fly and you should avoid long periods (over 2 hours) of restricted mobility, such as long car journeys.

## **Is there anything I should look out for when I go home?**

The majority of people recover from this treatment with no problem. However, if you are worried, or have concerns then please see your GP or phone the contact numbers below for advice.

# Who should I contact if I have any concerns?

Bev Stokes Day Surgery Unit

- **0114 226 6020**  
Monday to Friday, 8.00am - 6.00pm

Barnsley Day Surgery and Endoscopy Unit

- **01226 432645**  
Monday to Friday, 7.45am - 8.00pm

## Useful contact numbers:

Vascular Admin Co-Ordinator

- **0114 271 5534**  
(Mr R Nair, Consultant Vascular Surgeon)

Vascular Nurse Specialists

- **0114 226 9311**
- **0114 271 4688**



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