Washington University physicians offer a minimally invasive treatment for varicose veins.

Who is at risk for varicose veins? More than 30 million men and women suffer from venous disease in the United States. Because most believe it is just a cosmetic issue, only 1.9 million seek treatment each year.

Women are at greater risk due to hormonal changes that cause vein walls to relax during pregnancy, pre-menstruation or menopause.

Family history, obesity and standing or sitting for long periods of time can increase the chances of developing varicose veins.

Varicose veins can occur in anyone and at any age.

Learn more. If you experience symptoms with varicose veins (pain, throbbing, swelling, heaviness, fatigue, skin discoloration, skin wounds or severe discomfort), schedule a consultation to determine an appropriate treatment plan.

Consultation location
Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology at Barnes-Jewish Hospital
One Barnes-Jewish Plaza, 6th floor, St. Louis, MO 63110
Interventional radiology: (314) 362-2900

Procedure locations
Center for Advanced Medicine
4921 Parkview Place, Suite 3F, St. Louis, MO 63110
Barnes-Jewish West County Hospital
12634 Olive Blvd., Creve Coeur, MO 63141

Washington University interventional radiologists specializing in varicose vein ablation:
Michael Darcy, MD
Gretchen Foltz, MD
Seung Kwon Kim, MD
Seth Klein, MD
Naganathan Mani, MD
Nael Saad, MD
Suresh Vedantham, MD
**What are varicose veins?** Varicose veins are enlarged, bulging veins that are often painful and visible through the skin. They can appear as blue or purple twisted, knot-like cords and occur most frequently in legs. Varicose veins are the result of venous insufficiency, or venous reflux, where circulating blood does not properly return to the heart. This causes blood to pool and pressure to build in the veins which weakens vein walls and causes them to bulge.

Varicose veins are different than spider veins, which are enlarged blood vessels smaller in diameter and closer to the surface than varicose veins. Spider veins or non-symptomatic varicose veins may be the first indication of venous insufficiency. Left untreated, the condition may worsen in some and lead to symptomatic varicose veins.

**Symptoms and long-term consequences of varicose veins** include pain, throbbing, swelling, heaviness, fatigue, skin discoloration, wounds or ulcers and severe discomfort.

**How does varicose vein ablation work?**
Vein ablation is a minimally invasive, outpatient treatment performed using ultrasound guidance. This procedure is covered by most insurance plans for symptomatic patients.

After applying local anesthetic, an interventional radiologist inserts a thin catheter into the abnormal vein. Through this catheter, either laser or radiofrequency energy is applied to the inside of the vein to seal it. Once the vein is closed, the blood is rerouted to other healthy veins.

**Advantages of varicose vein ablation**
- Immediate return to normal activity with little or no pain
- No scarring
- Fast relief of painful symptoms
- No general anesthesia or hospitalization

**Is varicose vein ablation right for you?** If you have pain, swelling and/or other symptoms from varicose veins and wish to avoid surgery, you may be a candidate. Your Washington University radiology expert will work with you to determine the right treatment plan.

Relieve your symptoms. Schedule a consultation with an interventional radiology expert and feel confident with your treatment plan: (314) 362-2900