

ATLANTA + HEALTHCARE PROFILES

Goodbye, Bad Veins

The team at North Georgia Vein & Wellness gives patients a reason to step forward with comfort and confidence.

There aren't many positive things to say about varicose and spider veins. They're ugly. They cause legs to ache, swell, and cramp. They can lead to critical medical conditions. They worsen with age.

It's not all bad, however. Varicose and spider veins are also relatively easy to treat.

At North Georgia Vein & Wellness, medical director Peter Wrobel, M.D., and his team have treated thousands of patients—from teenagers to nonagenarians—who suffer from venous insufficiency, the condition that causes those big, bulging varicose veins and wispy tangles of spider veins.

"This is something that can be fixed," he says.

"It's not a cosmetic procedure, as some people believe, but a medical condition covered by insurance. The veins aren't working properly, and we can fix that with a few 30-minute procedures."

Rerouting Blood

The venous system is a bit like plumbing. Veins are pipes that carry deoxygenated blood back to the heart. When the valves in veins that facilitate this flow stop working properly, the blood gets backed up, pooling in the legs and feet and creating varicose and spider veins—evidence of failed plumbing.

Venous insufficiency affects people regardless of gender and for various reasons. Genetics are a factor; so are profession and lifestyle. People who stand a lot on the job—like restaurant servers, teachers, and nurses—are



Peter Wrobel, M.D.



more susceptible, as are women who've been pregnant. Unfortunately, the condition does not resolve on its own.

"The legs will get worse," says Dr. Wrobel. "The bulging and appearance will become more significant throughout the legs and ankles." In the worst cases, venous insufficiency causes skin ulcers and restless leg syndrome, and puts people at risk of developing deep vein thrombosis.

That's why Dr. Wrobel recommends coming to the clinic for treatment as soon as symptoms appear. During the first visit, his team takes ultrasound images of a patient's venous system to determine which veins are failing and how to treat them. Bigger varicose veins benefit from radiofrequency ablation, in which radiofrequency energy cauterizes

the vein. Medium and smaller veins may be treated with sclerotherapy, which involves injecting a solution directly into the vein that causes it to collapse. Other treatments at North Georgia Vein & Wellness include Varithena™ and VenaSeal™—two FDA-approved methods for treating great saphenous vein incompetence—and surgical removal of varicose veins via a phlebectomy.

With all treatments, the goal is to shut down or remove affected veins so that the blood reroutes to healthier pathways. Further sonograms confirm how well that's happening—but it's the patients themselves who are often the best judges.

"While cosmetic changes appear three to six months after the procedure, the swelling, aching, and cramping associated with that feeling of heavy legs can resolve in a matter of days," Dr. Wrobel says. "With relief that quick, most patients wish they'd come in sooner."