

Managing Varicose Veins During Pregnancy



Highlights

Varicose veins are swollen blood vessels that develop if blood pools in your veins.

They usually appear on your legs, but can also affect your vulva or rectum.

They can cause leg pain that gets worse at the end of the day.

Varicose veins are common in pregnancy, but they usually get better by the time your baby is 3 to 4 months old.

You can improve your symptoms by wearing compression stockings, avoiding standing for too long, putting your feet up when you can, and doing ankle exercises.

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What Are Varicose Veins?

Causes of Varicose Veins

Varicose Veins and Pregnancy

Throughout pregnancy, you produce more blood than usual. This increases the pressure in your veins.

As your baby grows, your uterus gets bigger and presses on the veins that return blood from your legs to your heart.

Your pregnancy hormones make the walls of your veins softer, and more likely to bulge.

Common Areas Affected

Pain and Discomfort

Health Risks

Prevention Tips

do ankle exercises to get your circulation going - bend each foot up and down and rotate it in circles

shift your weight from foot to foot regularly while you're standing

put your legs up \ (for example, on a foot stool or another chair\) when you're resting or sitting

avoid wearing anything tight around your waist or thighs

Treatment and Recovery

Managing Symptoms

exercising regularly, especially ankle exercises

applying cold packs to the painful veins
trying not to stand for too long
sitting with your legs up as often as you can
lying down on your left side
not wearing tight clothes or high heels
wearing compression stockings - these should be fitted professionally

Varicose Veins vs. Stretch Marks

Tools And Assistance

Consulting a Healthcare Provider Your doctor or midwife can assess the severity of your varicose veins, provide advice on management or prevention, and refer you to a specialist if needed.

Compression Stockings Professionally fitted compression stockings can help improve blood flow, reduce swelling, and relieve discomfort. It's important to wear the correct size and compression level for best results.

Personalized Exercise Recommendations A physiotherapist can suggest safe and effective exercises to activate your leg muscles, support circulation, and ease the feeling of heaviness or tired legs.

Nutritional Guidance A dietitian can help you identify foods that support vascular health and reduce the risk of vein issues, especially if you have dietary restrictions like vegetarianism or food intolerances.

Emotional and Psychological Support Pregnancy can bring emotional challenges, especially when physical discomfort is involved. A mental health professional can provide strategies to manage anxiety and stress.

Informational Materials and Handouts Printed or digital guides with visual instructions for exercises, prevention tips, and symptom management techniques can support you in your daily self-care routine.