

# Vascular surgery

Vascular surgery at The Priory Hospital

## Vascular Surgery

Vascular surgery deals with diseases that affect the vascular system, including those of the arteries, veins and lymphatic system. At The Priory Hospital our vascular surgeons are skilled in treating a range of vascular conditions, especially varicose veins and leg problems that can arise due to peripheral arterial disease (PAD).

Treatment for many conditions, for example, varicose veins is neither lengthy nor risky and the recovery period is short. However, the waiting list for surgery can be unfeasibly long – especially if you're seeking treatment for cosmetic reasons.

**Book an appointment and get fast track access to vein treatment at The Priory Hospital.**

Vascular conditions can cause pain, discomfort and worry. Our specialist vascular surgeons here at The Priory Hospital can treat all kinds of problems either surgically or non-surgically. Where intervention is required our consultants always opt for the most minimal of procedures that offer the maximum benefits in the shortest space of time.

## Common vascular conditions

At The Priory Hospital the number one vascular condition we treat is varicose veins. This unsightly and painful condition is commonly found on the legs and feet and they can not only cause discomfort but affect a sufferer's self-confidence. Without treatment varicose veins can, in some instances, lead to painful leg complications including leg ulcers.

**Varicose veins** are often blue, thick and knobby and bulge under the skin. They're caused by blood collecting in the superficial veins that lie just under the skin. They arise because the valves that help to direct blood back towards the heart become weak or damaged and can no longer close properly. When this happens blood is able to flow backwards, and it collects in the veins.

Varicose veins rarely get better over time – in fact quite the opposite. They may ache or you may develop leg ulcers, eczema or bleed more easily. And, of course, many people wish to have them treated because they dislike the way they look.

Surgery for varicose veins can take various forms and your consultant will choose the best option for you. Here at The Priory Hospital our specialists are especially experienced in the use of endovenous laser treatment. This involves a laser being inserted via a catheter to heat up the vein and seal it closed. An ultrasound scan then guides the laser to the correct position. This can usually take place under local anaesthetic. Pain relief will be required, and it will take around two to three weeks for a full return to normal activities.

Another common condition we treat here at The Priory Hospital is peripheral arterial disease (PAD) **Peripheral arterial disease** whereby sufferers experience pain or cramps when walking as well as numbness or weakness in the legs. Ulcers can also develop, which are slow to heal in the ankle area, or the feet.

PAD is caused by the build-up of fatty deposits in the arteries, narrowing them, and restricting blood supply to the leg muscles. Its also known as peripheral vascular disease (PVD). Failure to address peripheral arterial disease can be serious because blockages in the arteries can also affect other parts of the body for example those supplying the heart and brain.

Our surgeons are also experienced in detecting and treating **aortic aneurysms** with larger aneurysms requiring surgery either via open procedures or via endovascular repair (EVAR).

## **What to expect in your first consultation at The Priory Hospital?**

In your first meeting with your consultant they will examine you and ask you about your symptoms and how long you've had them. If you're presenting with varicose veins they may send you for an ultrasound scan to help locate the damaged valves.

Where surgery is the recommended option for varicose veins this is a minimally invasive procedure with laser surgery often the chosen route. This is performed as a day case procedure. Post operation, patients will need to wear stockings until the bruising settles down.

Where peripheral arterial disease is suspected diagnosis is usually done via a physical examination and by comparing the blood pressure in the arm and the ankle. A difference between the two may indicate the disease is present. This procedure is known as the ankle brachial pressure index (ABPI). Again a further ultrasound scan of the arteries may be necessary to see if there are any disease present. You will be referred to a radiologist here at The Priory Hospital for your scans.

Treatment for peripheral arterial disease generally involves advice around making better lifestyle for example giving up smoking and taking more exercise. Medications which focus on the underlying causes of the disease can also help to reduce the symptoms. Since the fatty deposits in the arteries are partly made up of cholesterol, taking medications to reduce high cholesterol is often recommended.

Other medicines may be prescribed to lower blood pressure or improve the blood flow to the legs. With treatment most patient's symptoms will remain stable, and they should experience an improvement in their pain.

For severe cases of arterial disease, an angioplasty, may be recommended. This is a procedure to widen blocked leg arteries using a balloon to stretch open a narrowed or blocked artery. Some angioplasties also involve the use of a short wire-mesh tube (a stent) to be inserted into the artery during the operation, and the stent is left in place permanently to allow blood to flow freely.

This too is a day case procedure and is minimally invasive – within two to three nights you should be walking as normal.

## **Why opt for vascular surgery at The Priory Hospital?**

The Priory Hospital is a flagship private hospital and renowned as a centre of excellence for vascular surgery. Our vascular surgeons are skilled in carrying out the latest minimally invasive procedures as well as the most complex open surgeries.

Patients at The Priory Hospital benefit from:

- Fast access to a consultation with some of the best vascular surgeons in the UK, for an expert diagnosis of your condition and rapid access to treatment. In most cases one of our consultants can see you within a week.
- Thorough diagnostic testing facilities for vascular disease, all carried out within The Priory Hospital's on-site digital imaging suite. Our state-of-the-art radiology suite is where many procedures are carried out including angioplasties.
- The Priory Hospital, unlike the majority of private hospitals, has an onsite ITU (intensive care unit) which means our surgeons are able to carry out the most complex of vascular surgery here.
- Our consultants are experienced in carrying out procedures including ultrasound-guided foam sclerotherapy (non-surgical vein removal using injections) and radiofrequency ablation which treats veins via radiofrequency energy which is similar to laser treatment.
- All patients receive close monitoring post operation, in some cases with The Priory Hospital's highly qualified physiotherapists are on hand to make sure recovery is achieved safely and speedily.
- A multidisciplinary approach to treatment. At The Priory Hospital all our specialised expertise is focused on you. Our teams of highly experienced consultants and clinicians discuss cases and treatments together. Teams can be made up of vascular and endovascular surgeons, neuroradiologists, anaesthetists, specialist nurses, plus specialist surgeons from other areas.
- You will receive all consultations and surgeries under the guidance of a senior vascular consultant, never a junior doctor or trainee.
- At The Priory Hospital you have the option to pay as you go as well as other flexible payment options. There's no requirement to have private medical insurance.