



Radiofrequency Ablation - RFA

This information is in addition to the detailed patient information personally provided by Mr Ponosh to you during your consultation. Please refer to the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Vein brochure also provided.

How do varicose veins develop?

This will be discussed with you at length by Mr Ponosh during your consultation. Further information is available via the Ponosh Vascular website under "Patients – Vein Consultation" and "What We Do – Varicose Veins". Alternatively, you can follow the link or QR code at the end of the information sheet.

What is Radiofrequency Ablation?

A common method for the treatment of varicose veins is **Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA)**. This involves a more minimally invasive technique in which a catheter is passed through the non-functional draining vein under ultrasound guidance. The catheter delivers a thermal energy to the vessel wall causing it to contract and collapse. This is conducted under a local and topical anaesthetic in the rooms as a "walk in-walk out" procedure. This technique is very similar to laser (EVLT), but RFA is more effective.

As discussed at your consultation, whilst the cause of your varicose veins are treated, your varicosities are not directly treated. In many instances they resolve completely following this treatment, however additional injection sclerotherapy may be required for the complete resolution of all varicose veins.

The procedure will take approximately 45 minutes but requires approximately 2 hours in the rooms. Unlike surgery there is no need for hospitalization or a general anaesthetic. There is no surgical scarring and virtually no "downtime". Some patients will require follow-up treatments to achieve the best results. Time to complete resolution and final appearance varies from person to person and even from vein to vein. **Most people have a satisfactory result after 3-6 weeks, but the final appearance may take up to 12-24 months after the last lot of treatment.**

These methods have been used globally for many years with universal clinical acceptance and medical evidence-based research providing effective, durable, and extremely safe use.

Possible complications and side effects.

Anaesthetic Complications: These are extremely low utilizing local anaesthetic. Please discuss if you have had any prior reactions to a local anaesthetic.

Deep Vein Thrombosis: DVT's are a very rare complication manifested as significant pain and swelling. This risk is reduced by a preventative pre-procedure blood thinning injection as well as maintaining mobility and your stockings. Please advise us if you have a personal or family history of DVT. RFA cannot be ideally conducted within 4 weeks of a long-haul flight.

Bruising: There is usually bruising along the vein that was treated and this resolves over a week or 2. This can sometimes be described as a tight band or "elastic band" sensation in the thigh.

Infection: This is extremely rare.

Tender Lumps: These may reflect clotted varicose veins which occur as part of the procedure. This is usually not a concern. Occasionally they may become inflamed (phlebitis) and may require additional minor medical therapy and anti-inflammatories.

Pain: In almost all cases pain is minimal.

Nerve Injury: The thermal energy from the RFA can rarely interfere with the nerves that supply the skin surface. These can be damaged and cause numbness and tingling to the skin which usually resolves within 3-6 months.

Recurrence: New varicose veins can develop and therefore it may be necessary to have further intervention in the future.

Cosmetic Issues: Whilst your leg/s will be dramatically improved by vein intervention, additional sclerotherapy and/or topical laser may be required. Please note that it is impossible to achieve perfection and you must be understanding of realistic cosmetic expectations.

Skin Staining: This may occur along the path of the RFA. It is rare and fades in almost all cases over 3-6 months. In some cases, it may persist for over 12 months.

Skin Burns: Extremely rare.

Failure of Treatment: This is rare. Failure of the technique is reported at less than 2% if cases.

Following your procedure.

To relieve pain, take simple analgesics such as regular paracetamol.

Compression stockings: A form will be provided to you by reception staff to obtain these stockings PRIOR to your procedure. These are to be purchased ONLY from the recommended supplier and are to be worn:

- **Continuously for 4 days.**
They are not to be removed for showering; you will be provided shower bags at your procedure.
- **Then, during the day only for 10 days.**
Remove stockings last thing at night before shower/bed and then replace first thing in the morning.

Elevate legs whenever possible, either resting in bed/couch or sitting with legs elevated.

Avoid prolonged bed rest.

Avoid prolonged standing and sitting.

Walking is encouraged.

Week of "lazy Sunday's" is recommended.

Gradually increase your exercise over the initial week.

Avoid strenuous exercise for 2 weeks.

Most people can return to work 1-3 days after the procedure, this can vary depending on patient and job.

Driving is not recommended for 24 hours after the procedure.

You should not fly for more than 4 hours for 4 weeks after the procedure.

Minor bruising, colour changes and minor lumps are normal and will slowly improve.

Remove dressing on day 4 after your procedure.

Monitor for signs of infection.

Contact Mr Ponosh's rooms or see your GP if you have any concerns regarding:

- Pain, tenderness or swelling of your calf or leg.
- Fever or sweats.
- Inflamed wounds or pus.

A routine ultrasound will be undertaken at 2-3 weeks by one of our in-house sonographers.

We will see you in the rooms at 4-6 weeks. Some small residual varicose or spider veins may persist. Mr Ponosh will discuss additional management options with you at this time.

A letter will be sent to your GP and/or referring doctor advising them of your management.

For further information please follow the link or scan the QR code below:

Radiofrequency Ablation – RFA Information:

<https://ponoshvascular.com.au/what-we-do/radiofrequency-ablation-rfa/>



Varicose Vein Information:

<https://ponoshvascular.com.au/varicose-veins-treatment/>

