My foot and leg appointment questions

Questions about foot pain, varicose veins and circulation to answer before your visit and take with you. Write your answers on the lines. This sheet stays with you; nothing is sent anywhere.

Safety first. Call 911 for severe chest pain or pressure, severe shortness of breath, or suddenly not being able to speak, see, walk or move. NHLBI calls any bleeding from a varicose vein a medical emergency and says to call 911. Difficulty breathing, or chest pain or discomfort that gets worse with a deep breath or coughing, can be signs of a blood clot in the lungs (pulmonary embolism), which CDC says needs immediate medical attention. Do not wait for a routine callback from your provider: go to an emergency department or call 911 or your local emergency number for help. Call your healthcare provider right away for a swollen, tender leg that is painful to the touch, which can be a sign of a blood clot in a deep vein (deep vein thrombosis); CDC says this needs prompt medical attention. This sheet is general education. It cannot tell you what is causing your pain, and it is not a reason to start, stop or change a medicine or to begin wearing compression stockings on your own.

What I notice

1. Where exactly is the pain: toes, ball of the foot, arch, heel, top of the foot, ankle, or higher in the leg?

   _____

2. When did it start, and did it begin after an injury, a change in activity or new shoes?

   _____

3. Does it get worse after sitting or standing for a long time, and does it ease when I lie down or raise my legs?

   _____

4. Does it come on when I walk or climb stairs and ease when I rest, or does it start when I stand up or change position?

   _____

5. Have I noticed swelling, bulging veins, skin color changes, itching, a foot that feels colder than the other, numbness or pins and needles?

   _____

6. Do I have a sore or wound on my foot, ankle or leg that is slow to heal?

   _____

My health and family background

7. Which health conditions do I have, such as diabetes, heart disease or kidney disease?

   _____

8. Do I smoke now, or did I smoke in the past?

   _____

9. Has anyone in my family had varicose veins, peripheral artery disease or blood clots?

   _____

10. Have I recently had surgery, an injury, a long trip or a long stretch of not moving much?

    _____

11. Am I pregnant, or have I given birth recently?

    _____

Questions to ask my clinician

12. Could this pain be coming from my veins, my arteries, my nerves or the foot itself, and how will we find out?

13. Do I need a test, such as an ultrasound of my leg veins or an ankle-brachial index test, and what will it show?

14. Do my varicose veins need treatment, and what could happen if I leave them untreated?

15. Are compression stockings right for me, which type, and is there any reason I should not wear them?

16. Should I see a specialist, such as a vascular specialist or a foot specialist?

17. Which changes mean I should call you right away or get emergency care?

Bring to your appointment

- This sheet with your answers
- A list of every medicine and supplement you take
- The names of other clinicians you see about your feet, legs or circulation
- Reports from any earlier leg or foot tests, if you have them

My notes

Sources

NHLBI: Varicose veins; Peripheral artery disease symptoms and diagnosis; Venous thromboembolism (nhlbi.nih.gov). MedlinePlus: Varicose veins; Foot pain; Varicose veins - what to ask your doctor; When to use the emergency room (medlineplus.gov). CDC: About venous thromboembolism (blood clots) (cdc.gov). Your clinician decides which questions, tests and next steps apply to you.

From the Cardio Guardian Editorial Team. Online version: getcardioguardian.com/insights/can-varicose-veins-cause-foot-pain/