



Criteria Guideline for Treatment of Patients with Varicose Veins or Venous Insufficiency

60 million patients in the United States have venous insufficiency or varicose veins. The majority of these patients do not know they have this issue. This is not limb- or life-threatening. Varicose veins are not associated with deep leg vein clots and rarely lead to any complications.

Varicose veins or venous insufficiency are covered by Kaiser Medical insurance in certain specific situations:

1. Patient must have documented reflux in a truncal vein (the greater saphenous or lesser saphenous veins) on a Doppler Ultrasound exam. If the patient does not have truncal reflux, or has only deep reflux, surgical treatment is not appropriate under the medical policy.

2. Patient must be symptomatic and must have tried 3 months of conservative treatment including:

- Weight reduction (patient must be less than 120% of ideal weight or BMI <29 in order to be a surgical candidate)
- Compression stockings (Medical grade-Jobst, Juzo, Sigvaris, Mediven)—these must be worn on a daily basis for most of the time the patient is awake
- Leg elevation
- Analgesics (ibuprofen, Alleve)
- Exercising
- Avoidance of prolonged standing.

The Health Plan will cover treatment for any of the following:

- Intractable ulceration secondary to venous stasis
- More than one episode of minor hemorrhage from a ruptured superficial varicosity
- A single significant hemorrhage from a ruptured superficial varicosity, especially if transfusion of blood is required
- Recurrent superficial thrombophlebitis
- Severe and persistent leg pain and swelling interfering with activities of daily living

Please note that treatment of visible varicosities alone by phlebectomy or injection sclerotherapy or of spider/reticular veins by sclerotherapy or laser treatment are NEVER a covered benefit.

The Cosmetic Center of Kaiser Permanente will treat only small spider veins using sclerotherapy. They are not equipped to treat larger spiders or varicosities. Please see our list of recommend Community Vascular surgeons who do these types of treatments (an out of pocket expense).

Please feel free to call us at (408) 851-9630 at the Surgery Clinic for any questions regarding the above.

Thank you.

The Vascular Surgery Department
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