

## Scanning the veins in the legs

### What are varicose veins?

The veins carry blood back from the extremities to the heart; they have valves to control the direction of flow. If the valves in the veins in the legs are not working well some of the blood flows back towards the foot. The blood may collect in the veins, causing them to enlarge (the veins are then called 'varicose'). Varicose veins may be hereditary, caused by defective valves, pregnancy, obesity or hormonal changes.

### Why is it important to scan varicose veins?

There are two systems of veins; deep and superficial. If the superficial vein valves are not working, the veins may become painful and the legs can swell. If your surgeon suggests an operation to remove the veins, the scan can clearly map out the problem veins. If the deep vein valves are not working this can lead to leg swelling and ulceration. It is useful for the surgeons to know the condition of the deep veins in order to plan further treatment.

### Where do I go?

Vascular studies, 6th floor - entrance next to 6 west A ward

### Who will I see?

You will be seen by a member of the clinical vascular scientist team, who will perform and interpret your ultrasound scan.

### How do I prepare for the test?

There is no preparation for this test. You will be asked to remove some of your clothing in order to expose your legs for the scientist to perform the scan.

### What does the test involve?

You will need to stand during the examination. Gel is applied to the leg and the scientist scans from the groin crease to the ankle. The scan takes about 30 - 45 minutes.

### Risks and side-effects

Some people experience dizziness or feel faint during the examination. This is a normal response and can easily be alleviated by lying flat for a moment.

### What happens next?

The clinical vascular scientist writes a report of the scan result and informs the doctor who requested the scan. The clinical scientist can comment on the findings. You will be able to discuss the results more fully with the doctor at your next out-patient appointment.

### Do you have any further questions?

Do not hesitate to contact vascular studies 020 7830 2862 and speak to one of our clinical vascular scientists.

**If you would like this information in an alternative format, please ask a member of staff.**

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