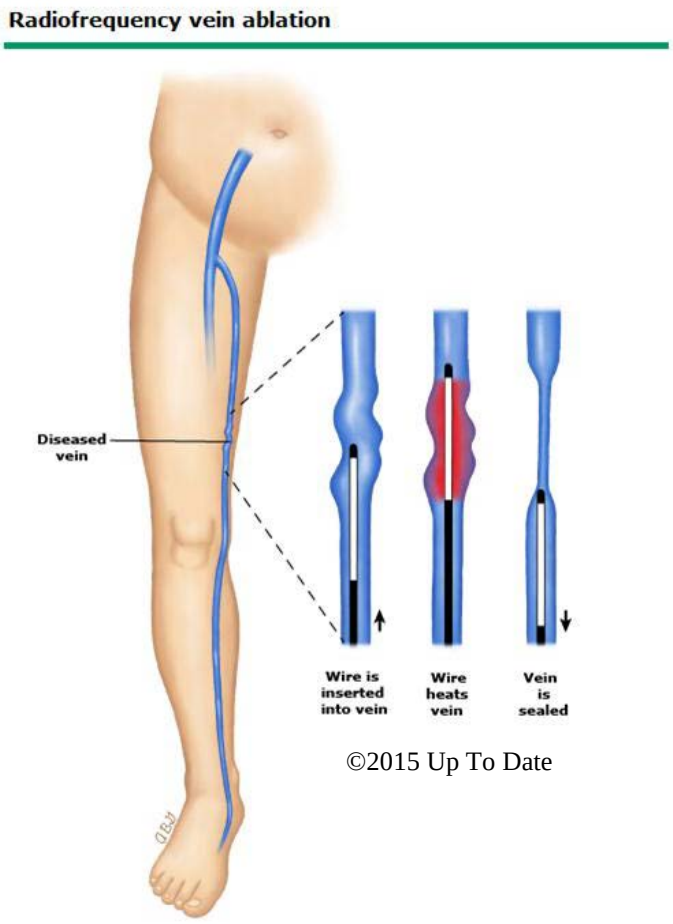
Radiofrequency Ablation

What is radiofrequency ablation?

Radiofrequency ablation is a minimally invasive, varicose vein treatment procedure. Radiofrequency energy is used to treat specific problem veins.



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Pre-procedure instructions:

- Bring your prescribed compression stockings with you on the day of your procedure.
- Wear loose-fitting pants or shorts.
- Do not shave your legs the night before or the day of your procedure.
- Do not apply lotion to your legs the day of your procedure.
- You will be given medicine during the procedure. Make sure you have a driver to take you to the office and back to your home.
- You will need to take an antibiotic at home before this procedure.
- You will be offered a prescription for medicine to help you relax before this procedure.

What to expect during the procedure:

- You will be asked to stand for 30 minutes before the start of your procedure.
- Once in the procedure room, you will change into a gown. The leg we will be treating will be prepared for the procedure.
- Before and after pictures may be taken. These will be used to show the results.

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- The doctor will numb your skin with a local anesthetic.
- A needle and small catheter (tube) will be inserted into your vein.
- The radiofrequency ablation probe is inserted through the catheter. This should be painless.
- At this time, anesthesia is injected around the vein. This usually feels like several small pricks. This numbs and protects nearby areas from the radiofrequency.
- The probe is slowly pulled back to treat the vein. This part of the procedure should cause only mild discomfort or pressure.
- Bandages are placed when the catheter is removed. Compression stockings are placed over the bandages.

Post-procedure instructions:

- Keep your thigh high compression stockings on all the time until your first follow up appointment. This should be about three days later.
- You cannot shower or take a bath until after your follow up appointment.
- You will have an ultrasound at your first follow up appointment.
- You may shower after your follow up appointment. Please avoid hot water, hot baths, hot tubs and saunas for at least two weeks.
- Continue to wear compression stockings while you are awake. Put them on as soon as possible when you get up for the day. Remove them right before going to bed.
- Avoid sun exposure or tanning to the treated veins for four weeks. This may cause skin discoloration.
- Take Tylenol™ (aceto….) as needed for pain. Please avoid anti-inflammatory medicines such as ibuprofen and aspirin for ten days.
- Walking is encouraged. Resume normal activities.
- For two weeks after treatment, avoid:
    - Strenuous aerobic activity
    - Running
    - Weight lifting
    - Long periods of sitting
    - Long periods of standing

What to expect after the procedure:

- Please be patient with the final results. It may take several weeks to months to see the full effect.
- Your veins may look worse before they look better. The treated vein may become red, purple or bruised. You may have swelling or tenderness. The veins may become hard before disappearing. This is a normal part of the healing process.
- If symptoms are severe or get worse over time, please call the office at (269) 349-7696.

Side Effects

Radiofrequency ablation is safe; however, as with any procedure, can have adverse side effects.

- Darkening of the skin – Avoid direct sun exposure for four weeks after procedure to reduce the risk.
- Infection – There is always a small risk of infection with any procedure.
- Vessel injury or hematoma – The chance of this is low due to our use of ultrasound guidance.
- Nerve injury— If nerve injury occurs, you may have numbness or tingling of that area. It is usually temporary.
- Deep vein thrombosis (a blood clot in a vein) or pulmonary embolism (a clot in the lungs). This is a very rare, but serious, side effect. The ultrasound that is done on your follow up visit will check for this side effect. If deep vein thrombosis is found, you will need treatment.