

# PAIN FROM A VEIN?

## OUTPATIENT PROCEDURES TREAT PAIN CAUSED BY VARICOSE VEINS

**F**or Melody Curtis, 65, of Selinsgrove, living and working on a broiler chicken farm is a hard way of life, but when she started to walk unevenly and have difficulty working due to the pain caused by her varicose veins, she knew it was time to see if something could be done.

“I would wake up several times at night with pain, burning, and throbbing,” said Curtis, noting the discomfort felt like something was pinching her skin all the time, with periods of throbbing or even sharp, piercing pain.

“I started getting varicose veins 32 years ago when I was pregnant with my twins and over the years it just got worse.”

Todd Stefan, MD, FACS, RPVI, vascular specialist and surgeon at the Heart and Vascular Center of Evangelical, sees many women start their relationship with varicose veins at pregnancy.

After many years with varicose veins, Melody Curtis had them treated at Evangelical. She can now enjoy family activities and other events without pain.



“It’s not uncommon for women to see varicose veins first during pregnancy and then have them go away when they give birth,” said Dr. Stefan. “What women need to know is that if they show up during pregnancy, the chance of them appearing in the future is very high and they should pay attention to what their legs are telling them.”

Curtis agrees: “My varicose veins became very visible as I got older. I had one that was the size of a pencil that literally came up over my right knee, and I was always afraid of it getting bumped or hit.”

Curtis met with Dr. Stefan, who told her that for her insurance to cover any type of procedure, she would have to wear compression stockings for at least three months to verify the procedure was needed. Per his instruction, she began wearing the compression stockings, which did assist with the pain and throbbing to some degree when worn.

In March 2016, Curtis underwent ablation, ligation, and excision of the varicose veins on both her right and left legs, doing one leg one week and the other the next week. Curtis was home the same day of the outpatient procedures with instructions to continue wearing compression stockings and to walk as much as possible.

“The procedure went much better than anticipated,” said Curtis. “There was some healing and sensitivity

## SEARCHING IN VEIN FOR A CURE?

Varicose veins are veins that have become enlarged and overfilled with blood. They are purple-bluish and usually have a twisted, bulging appearance. It’s a common condition, especially in women, and most commonly found in legs and feet.

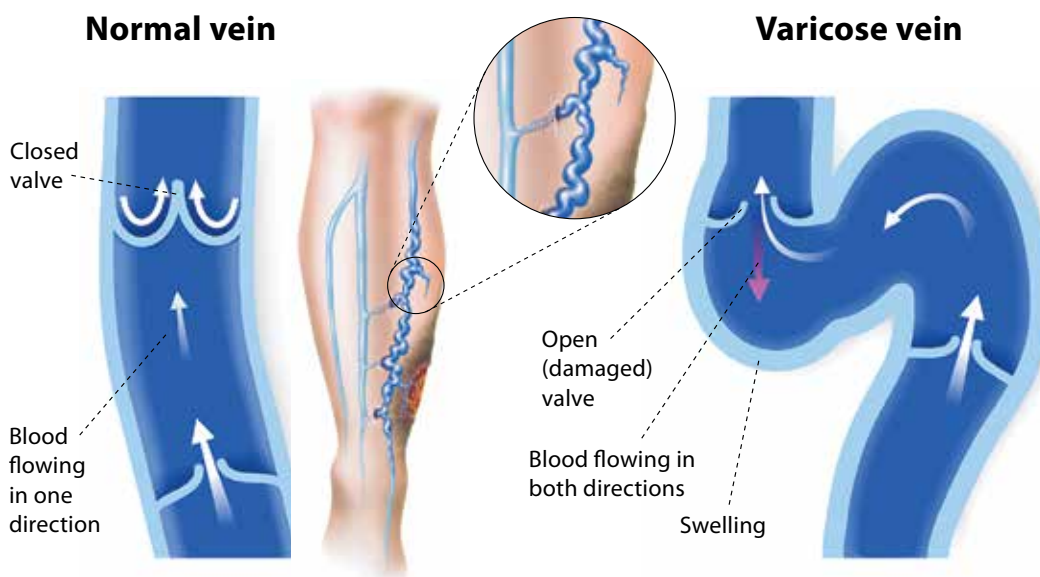
**Symptoms:** Usually painless, but could produce:

- An achy or heavy feeling in legs
- Burning, cramping, or swelling in legs
- Increased pain after sitting or standing for long periods
- Itching around the vein
- Hardening or discoloration around the vein

**Causes:** When the vein isn’t functioning properly, blood can collect rather than flow to the heart. Risk factors include:

- Age
- Pregnancy
- Prolonged standing
- Obesity
- Prior leg trauma
- Family genetics

If you have varicose veins, consult with a physician to discuss treatment options.



at first, but it was well worth it. I went to the grocery store for the first time in years and could walk around the store without hurting.”

“I made the decision that I was too young to be held back by varicose vein pain. I had things I wanted to do—like work on my farm—but even more importantly, I’m now doing things with my family and going to my grandkids’ sporting games and other events without pain. Dr. Stefan and the procedures have changed everything for the better,” said Curtis.