

SIGVARIS

LIFE FOR LEGS



Managing leg health
during pregnancy

Common leg health problems during pregnancy

Venous disorders and leg health problems are among the most frequent medical conditions in North America. You may experience these conditions for the first time during pregnancy. For example, swollen feet, tired aching legs and a feeling of heaviness in the legs are among everyday symptoms that pregnant women may experience. These symptoms are especially frequent when:

- a history of varicose veins and venous disease exists in the family
- a venous condition was already present before the pregnancy
- the woman sits and stands for prolonged periods of time while pregnant
- the woman does not exercise regularly during the pregnancy, or
- the woman has had more than one pregnancy

Pregnancy plays a role in the development of varicose veins. 30% of women pregnant for the first time, and 55% of women who have had two or more full term pregnancies develop varicose veins.*

* *Swiss Medical Weekly 2001:131:659-662.*



The importance of blood circulation

Blood circulation supplies the body with nutrients and oxygen and removes waste products. Together, the heart, arteries, and veins facilitate blood circulation. The heart pumps fresh, oxygen-rich blood throughout the body via the arteries. The veins channel oxygen-depleted blood back to the heart. Healthy veins are vital in maintaining good blood circulation in the body.

Normal Vein



Blood flows up
one way through
normal valves

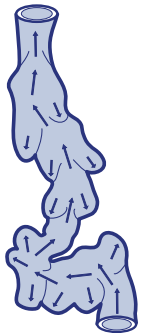
Veins and valves

Valves inside the veins keep the blood moving back toward the heart. These valves prevent the force of gravity from pulling blood back down toward the feet.

Varicose veins

When the veins are damaged, gravity will hinder normal blood flow causing blood to form pools in the weakened, damaged veins. The pooling blood causes these veins to enlarge. Twisted masses of veins beneath the surface of the skin, known as varicose veins, often result. Varicose veins are larger and located deeper in the leg than spider veins. Spider veins are small red, blue and purple veins on the surface near the skin.

Abnormal Vein

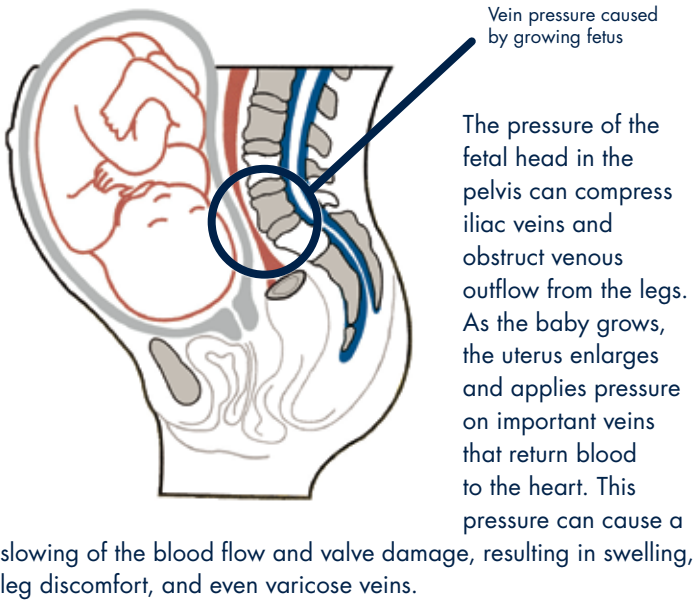


Blood flows both
ways through
damaged valves

This brochure is designed to answer your basic questions on common leg health problems during pregnancy. With a few simple steps, these conditions can be managed and reduced or eliminated. Remember to always consult your physician with any medical questions.

Effect of pregnancy on the venous system

During pregnancy, many hormonal changes occur in the body that have a profound effect on the veins. Blood volume increases between 40% to 50%*, while increased amounts of progesterone cause the vein walls to dilate and become less elastic.



A pregnant woman's feet and legs may start to swell after sitting or standing for only a short time. In principle, this is a completely normal symptom. However, if your feet are already swollen when you get up in the morning, consult your doctor. While these symptoms may subside after delivery, with each subsequent pregnancy, they are less likely to completely disappear.

* *Physiology*: Issue 9, (1998) 1-3; Physiological Changes Associated with Pregnancy.

5 ways to keep your legs healthy during pregnancy

1. Remember, moving legs are healthier legs! Avoid standing and sitting for prolonged periods.
2. Stay active. Frequent moderate physical exercise (example: walking, swimming, hiking) is important to maintain healthy legs and helps you maintain an overall healthy life-style.
3. Wear medical compression hosiery. Compression hosiery and socks help promote blood circulation by improving venous blood return back to the heart.
4. At night or when resting during the day, lie comfortably with your legs slightly elevated.
5. Avoid extended exposure to heat from sunbathing, hot baths, or the sauna as excessive heat will cause your veins to dilate and may induce swelling.



Compression Hosiery benefits

Compression therapy is the application of graduated external pressure to the limb to reduce venous pressure within the limb.

Blood flows faster in compressed veins than in dilated ones. By applying external compression, the diameter of the veins is reduced, thereby increasing blood velocity. This also causes valves which are not regulating blood flow well to function better.

When using compression hosiery, make sure the compression is graduated, with the strongest pressure at the ankle and decreasing as it goes up the leg. Graduated hosiery is the most effective in preventing edema or swelling, and in promoting better blood circulation.

Clinical studies prove that graduated compression stockings are beneficial and should be a mainstay in relieving symptoms of chronic venous insufficiency during pregnancy and the post partum period.*

* Büchtemann AS, et al. *Br J Obstet Gynaecol.* 1999 Jun;106(6):563-9: The effect of compression therapy in venous haemodynamics in pregnant women.



Product selection guide

SIGVARIS offers a wide range of stockings designed to promoting women's leg health during pregnancy. Our stockings are available in several fashionable colors and styles.

Non-prescription products For prevention and heavy, tired legs: 15-20 mmHg

Sheer Fashion Maternity Pantyhose is an off-the-shelf product available at a variety of outlets. Please visit www.sigvarisusa.com/find to locate a dealer near you.



Prescribed products For mild, moderate, and more severe symptoms: 20-30 mmHg and 30-40 mmHg

SIGVARIS offers many styles, including calf length, thigh-hi, and maternity pantyhose which are ideal for prevention and management of various levels of venous conditions.

Consult your physician to obtain a prescription for the appropriate SIGVARIS product and compression strength for your condition. Your health care provider will direct you to a local dealer, or you may visit our website for more locations. A trained fitter will measure your ankle, calf, and thigh, as well as obtain a length measurement to ensure a proper fit of your stocking.

SIGVARIS products are available at select dealers with trained staff who can assist you in your final product selection. Please visit www.sigvarisusa.com/find to locate a dealer near you.



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