

## Varicose Veins in Men – and bikini contests!

Where did summer go? It seems like only yesterday the snow had finally melted, after a prolonged winter, and here I am talking about fall. In fairness, this summer was an extraordinarily busy time for us at Alsara Vein Clinic. We saw more new patients in July than any other month in the past. Every one of my staff members worked extra, long hours to ensure each patient received top-notch care, even in the face of increased patient volume and the numerous urgent requests to see a patient the same day.

I am humbled by both the confidence that numerous referring providers have in our care and the trust of patients who refer family and friends. For example: Jim\*, a 76-year-old gentleman, came to Alsara Vein Clinic after exhausting all options at hospitals and other clinics in the area. With a tracheostomy collar in place, he was unable to talk and breathe at the same time, yet he had much to discuss. After providing his medical history, he cleared his “airway trash”, drew a deep breath and concluded by saying, “I am hanging by the last straw. My neighbor across the street advised me to come to you. You took care of him when he had no hope that anything could be done.” Since then, the topic of his conversation has been anything but medical. Taking swift breaks to inhale, he seemed more interested in talking about his friends, family and his many aspirations although, as he politely stated, “I realize that I won’t be able to participate in a bikini contest anytime soon!”

Later that week I saw Tom\*\*, a 58-year-old, who had avoided seeking care as he was sure that leg amputation was going to be the only option available, given the advanced stage of chronic venous insufficiency in his leg. It seems that every clinic day has its fair share of patients with swelling, severe leg cramps, and restlessness. We also see many male patients with clots, bleeding and poorly healing sores in their legs, all of which are features of advanced, chronic venous insufficiency.

A detailed duplex ultrasound scan (Mapping) provides us with a “road map” of all the key veins in the legs. The goal of every treatment modality is to get rid of the underlying varicose veins and restore proper blood flow by routing blood to the healthy veins. The new, modern, minimally invasive treatments allow us the opportunity to eliminate the diseased veins safely and effectively with very little downtime; these are also much safer than surgeries used in the past. Over the last 10 years, further advancements have occurred in our understanding of venous diseases and the options available to treat them. For instance,



the latest 1470 nm laser used at Alsara Vein Clinic offers a 40-fold improvement in energy absorption, compared to older generation lasers, resulting in even less bruising and discomfort. All treatments including Endovenous Laser Ablation and Ultrasound Guided Sclerotherapy are performed in the comfort of the office setting and patients can resume normal activities immediately.

I feel very fortunate for the technology and scientific knowledge backed by experience of successfully treating thousands of patients over the past decade. Although participating in a bikini contest is not completely ruled out for Jim\*, I suspect that he will put his legs to much greater use in the years ahead!

**Sam Gupta, M.D., MPH**

\*Jim is an actual patient of Alsara Clinic and has graciously given permission to use his quotes, story and images.

\*\*Tom – his name changed to protect confidentiality.

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## Fall Newsletter 2019

- Varicose Veins & Venous Insufficiency – Unhealthy veins are like weeds in a garden
- New Year New Legs! – Time to act is NOW
- Varicose Veins in Men – and bikini contests!

“How beautiful the leaves grow old. How full of light and color are their last days.”  
– John Burroughs

### Calendar Event

Visit the **Alsara Vein Clinic** booth at:

**2019 Josephine expo**  
*Sweet on her!*

**Saturday • October 5, 2019**

10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

St. Joseph Civic Arena

100 N 4th Street • St. Joseph, MO 64501

**FREE Educational Ultrasound Leg Vein Scans**

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**Walk-ins Welcome!**

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## Varicose Veins & Venous Insufficiency Unhealthy veins are like weeds in a garden

Maybe you’ve seen the blue or purple squiggly veins on your legs that look like lines on a roadmap and wondered how to get rid them. Maybe you are experiencing pain, cramps, restlessness or have sores on your legs and you were told by your Primary Care Provider that you have varicose veins. Perhaps you wondered “What the heck are varicose veins anyway” and “How do I get rid of them?”

### What is a Varicose Vein (and CVI)?

In simplest terms, **varicose veins** are **faulty blood vessels** that have become overstretched and swollen with blood.

When your heart beats, it pumps blood through arteries to every part of your body carrying oxygen and essential nutrients. Since you have a limited amount of blood (about 5 liters in an adult), the deoxygenated blood returns to the heart via countless veins in your body. The

veins in your legs are farthest from the heart and must work against gravity to push blood back to the heart. Compounded by other risk factors, some veins wear out over time and become “varicose”. Pooling of blood in varicose veins may cause symptoms such as **heaviness, tiredness, itching, burning, cramping, restlessness and pain.** Left untreated, the increased pressure of blood in the leg veins can leak out, causing problems such as **edema, skin discoloration, sores in legs** that heal poorly and frequent **skin infections.** This condition is called **Chronic Venous Insufficiency (CVI).**

“Simplicity is complexity resolved.”  
– Constantin Brancusi

(Continued inside)

## New Year New Legs! The time to act is NOW

It’s that time of year again, when you are busy with school schedules, getting ready for cooler weather, and making plans for upcoming holidays. This is also an important time to make sure you’re getting the maximum benefit from your health insurance plan.

Treatment of symptomatic varicose veins is typically covered by almost all major insurers including Medicare and Medicaid. Many insurers, however, require a 3-month trial of conservative therapy including the use of compression stockings. Also, more than one visit is typically necessary. For “snowbirds,” the earlier you start the process, the more likely it is that you will enjoy

warm weather with “cool” legs when you are in the South.

Whether you have insurance benefits remaining or if you have funds set aside in a flexible spending account (FSA) or healthcare saving account (HSA), now is the time to schedule treatment. Now is the time to take care of the unsightly varicose veins that cause poor circulation in your legs, which not only affect your quality of life, but also expose you to complications if left untreated, such as ulcers and clots. Physician offices typically experience a heavy demand for procedures toward the end of the year as patients try to maximize their benefits. **Alsara Vein Clinic** is no exception and we have extended hours and evening appointments available for your convenience.

Call us today at **816-396-0245.**

**Start the New Year with healthy, beautiful legs!**



# Varicose Veins & Venous Insufficiency

Unhealthy veins are like  
weeds in a garden

Varicose veins are like nasty weeds in your yard.  
Left untreated, they continue to worsen and turn  
into a serious problem.



(Continued from outside)

## Who gets them?

Although varicose veins affect both men and women, they are slightly more common in women who tend to have them at an earlier age. This may also have to do with the fact that men are less inclined to seek timely medical care. Hence, it is not a surprise that men have more advanced stages of varicose veins and CVI by the time they see a vein specialist compared to women. People in general are more likely to get them as they get older.

Frequently there is a genetic predisposition to vein problems. That means that if your mom or your sister has them, you are more likely to also have them. Things that put pressure on your legs and feet — like being overweight or standing for a long time, every day, without exercise — can also cause varicose veins. Pregnancies also make veins worse due to increased pressure of the uterus and the extra blood volume.

## Do I need these veins? How do I get rid of them?

Once a vein is varicose, it is a diseased blood vessel much like a “weed” in your yard. Just like weeds compete for space and nutrients in your yard (and are formidable competitors!), varicose veins have weakened walls that facilitate easy entry of blood but instead of pushing the blood back in circulation, the blood tends to pool in them causing a wide variety of problems including life threatening blood clots.

In the past, varicose veins were “stripped” much like pulling weeds from the yard. This was a painful, imprecise and invasive surgery with significant downtime, scarring and risk of complications. Even worse, many patients required additional treatment due to other veins rapidly becoming varicose.

In the last 15 to 20 years, our increased understanding of venous disease, modern tools available for accurate

diagnosis and minimally invasive treatments have revolutionized how we treat vein problems in legs. After your vein specialist has performed a detailed ultrasound scan of your legs, he/she will create a “road map”. Then, using tools such as Endovenous Laser Ablation (EVLA), your Vein Specialist can seal the underlying varicose veins at their source, much like closing the large root of weeds from the inside. Any smaller, persistent veins can then be treated using injection sclerotherapy that are analogous with using a weed killer in your yard. Some unsightly varicose veins are removed by microphlebectomy, the careful removal of unwanted veins through tiny openings using very fine instruments without the need for sutures or risk of scarring.

Current treatments are very safe, effective and provide long-lasting relief without any downtime or painful recovery. Since varicose veins and CVI are serious problems, almost all health insurance companies, including Medicare and Medicaid, offer coverage for necessary scans and treatments.



"The Doctor will see you now. Here's  
your medical jargon dictionary."

## 1 Laser Treatment

Sealing the underlying  
diseased “roots”



## 2 Sclerotherapy

For smaller or persistent  
veins

Health restored!

