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Vail health column: Venous disease



Special to the Daily Julie Current is a physician assistant and phlebologist at Rocky Mountain Vein Institute: Vail Valley, located in Edwards.

Venous disease, whether it be mild, moderate, or severe, can slow us down. It can impact our lives in negative ways and disrupt our sleep. It can also give our legs an unappealing look - resulting in skin discoloration, varicose, reticular and/or spider veins.

Unfortunately venous disease is progressive, meaning it will worsen over time. Most of us want to keep our favorite activities going - from hiking to skiing to dancin - no matter what our age.

Symptoms

Approximately 30 percent of men and women in the United States have varicose veins and associated chronic venous disease. Symptoms of venous disease can often go unrecognized, and they include legs that ache, swell or feel "heavy," or that are restless and cramp at night.

If this describes your legs, you may also have visible varicose veins, spider veins, and/or skin discoloration. Left untreated, venous disease can interrupt your physical activity level, dampen your quality of life, and lead to other medical problems that may affect your overall health.

Treatment options

Depending on the condition that causes venous disease, treatment options will vary. One of the most common options is wearing medical grade compression stockings, which apply graduated pressure on the legs to improve venous blood flow and reduce leg swelling or venous insufficiency. You might be surprised at how many people wear compression stockings these days.

To help prevent problems, for instance, many athletes wear athletic compression socks during and post competition and/or workout. These specialized socks help to increase blood flow and muscle oxygenation while they decrease the possibility of injuries such as shin splints. The pressure of the socks helps to flush lactic acid from muscles, which reduces aching and swelling.

In addition to compression stockings, there are minimally invasive, office-based procedures for the treatment of venous disease. These procedures are very safe, very effective, and require no time off from work or disruption of personal responsibilities. These procedures are performed at the Rocky Mountain Vein Institute (RMVI) office in Edwards.

A healthy lifestyle

We are fortunate to live in a community where everyone wants to live life to the fullest. Most of us here in the Vail Valley strive to be at our optimum level of health, and this lifestyle is contagious. When I met RMVI CEO Erin Gibbs and RMVI Founder Dr. Gordon Gibbs to discuss the possibility of opening a clinic in the Vail Valley, I knew right away that the RMVI vision would fit in perfectly with the way of life here. The vision of the institute is to consider the whole person, from head to toe, and although the focus is venous disease, our treatment plans are individualized. We want to encourage healthy lifestyles, and overcoming venous disease is one of the many ways to keep us moving.

Julie Current is a physician assistant and phlebologist at Rocky Mountain Vein Institute: Vail Valley, located in Edwards. RMVI is a network of vein centers that offers total vein care, from the simplest cosmetic problem to the most life-altering condition. For more information, email Julie at jcurrent@rmviservices.com or visit the website at www.rmvein.com.