

## A Brief Note on Chronic Venous Insufficiency

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### DESCRIPTION

Chronic Venous Insufficiency (CVI) is a condition in which blood pools in the veins and strains the vein walls. The most common cause of CVI is superficial venous reflux disease, a treatable condition.

This condition usually affects the legs, as a functioning venous valve is required to ensure efficient blood flow from the lower extremities. When venous dysfunction causes serious symptoms such as swelling and ulcers, this is called chronic venous disease. Sometimes referred to as chronic peripheral venous insufficiency, it should not be confused with post thrombosis syndrome, in which the deep veins were damaged by previous deep vein thrombosis.

Veins return blood to the heart from all the body's organs. To reach the heart, the blood needs to flow upward from the veins in the legs. Calf muscles and the muscles in the feet need to contract with each step to squeeze the veins and push the blood upward. To keep the blood flowing up, and not back down, the veins contain one-way valves.

Chronic venous failure occurs when these valves are damaged and blood is left behind. Valve damage may occur as the result of aging, extended sitting or standing or a combination of aging and reduced mobility. When the vein and valve weakened to a point that is difficult to flow to the heart, the intravenous blood pressure remains increased for a long time, which results in CVI. Chronic venous insufficiency occurs most frequently as a result of diseases known as Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)

CVI also results from pelvic tumors and vascular malformations, and sometimes occurs for unknown reasons. Failure of the valves in leg veins to hold blood against gravity leads to sluggish movement of blood out of the veins, resulting in swollen legs. Chronic venous insufficiency that develops as a result of DVT is also known as post thrombosis syndrome. Up to 30% of DVT patients develop this problem within 10 years of diagnosis.

Symptoms of chronic venous insufficiency are listed below

- Varicose vein
- Itching
- Excessive pigmentation
- Venous lymphedema
- Chronic swelling of the legs and ankles
- Venous ulcer
- Vein congestion
- Ulcer
- Stasis dermatitis
- Contact dermatitis
- Lipodermatosclerosis
- Malignant tumor
- Depression
- Inflammation

If CVI is left untreated, the pressure and swelling increase until the small blood vessels in the legs (capillaries) burst. When this occurs, the underlying skin turns reddish-brown color and is very sensitive to being broken if bumped or scratched.

At the least, rupture of capillaries can cause inflammation of local tissue and damage to internal tissue. In the worst case, this leads to ulcers, open wounds on the surface of the skin. These venous stasis ulcers are difficult to heal and can become infected. If the infection is uncontrolled, it can spread to surrounding tissues, a condition known as cellulitis.

Drugs that increase blood flow through blood vessels can be used in compression therapy to help heal leg ulcers. Aspirin can also be used to help heal ulcers. A drug that removes excess fluid from the body through the kidneys (diuretic) is not often used. But they may be used if other conditions such as heart failure or kidney disease are also linked to the swelling.

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