

# Varicose veins which occur during pregnancy

Op. Dr. Cafer Abbaoglu informs about prevention and treatment of varicose veins that occur during pregnancy



**V**aricose veins are bulging, purple or blue veins that appear just under the surface of your skin. They most commonly happen in the legs, though they can also appear in other areas. Varicose veins affect about one in three women, and more women than men have them. You're also more likely to get them if they run in your family, or if you are overweight.

At the same time, you have more blood circulating round your body, as well as the pregnancy hormone progesterone, which relaxes your blood vessel walls.

## **Pregnancy hormone progesterone**

These things combined make the veins in your legs more likely to become swollen (varicose). Though the good news is that they are likely to get better, once you've had your baby. You're more prone to getting varicose veins in your legs, but you can get them in other parts of your body. Piles are varicose veins of the rectal area, and are common during pregnancy.

## **What can I do to prevent varicose veins?**

You may be able to prevent them or at least minimize them. Here are some tips:

- Exercise daily. Even just a brisk walk around the block can help your circulation.
- Strive to keep within the recommended weight range for your stage of pregnancy.

- Elevate your feet and legs whenever possible. Use a stool or box to rest your legs on when you're sitting, and keep your feet elevated on a pillow when you're lying down.

Don't cross your legs or ankles when sitting. Don't sit or stand for long periods without taking breaks to move around.

Sleep on your left side. Wedge a pillow behind your back to keep yourself tilted to the left and elevate your feet with a pillow. Since the inferior vena cava is on the right side, lying on your left side relieves the vein of the weight of the uterus, thus decreasing pressure on the veins in your legs and feet. Wear special support hose. Graduated-compression stockings, which are twice as thick as normal pantyhose, work best. These stockings are available from medical supply stores and pharmacies. They're tight at the ankle and get looser as they go up the leg, making it easier for blood to flow back up toward your heart. As a result, they help prevent swelling and may keep your varicose veins from getting worse.

