

Desert Vein and Vascular Institute

Seeking treatment for varicose veins isn't vain at all

BY JUDITH SALKIN

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■ Do you know what “venous reflux disease” is? What if we said varicose or spider veins?

How much do any of us really know about what happens to the veins that lie just under the skin that causes them to bulge and fill with blood rather than circulating it back to the heart? How serious can the condition become if left untreated? And how do you choose the best physician to treat what a lot of us often consider a cosmetic problem?

At Desert Vein and Vascular Institute in Rancho Mirage, Doctors Makku Sivia, Son Ha Yu, and Dr. John Lee are board certified vascular surgeons who have been trained to treat not only the cosmetic problems created by varicose and spider veins, but also to diagnose and treat other venous conditions that may exist in the leg veins. They are the only board certified vascular surgeons treating varicose veins in the Coachella Valley.

Between them, they have nearly 20 years of experience in practice, along with school, fellowships, and residencies.

Nearly one in four adults will experience some degree of varicose veins, or venous reflux disease, in their lifetime. Risk factors for varicose or spider veins include age, gender (women are affected in greater numbers than men), family history, prolonged standing, multiple pregnancies, and obesity.

The problem begins when the tiny valves in the superficial veins that lie under the skin that normally carry blood back to the heart weaken and allow blood to flow back toward the lower legs.

“Eventually, that causes the blood to pool and enlarge the veins,” Dr. Son Ha Yu explains.

“In some cases the patient will develop phlebitis (blood clots) that can be very painful in the veins.”

In addition to the unsightly veins, other symptoms that develop include swelling, heaviness and fatigue in the legs, aching or cramps, restless legs, skin itching and burning, rashes or skin discoloration, ulcers, open wounds,

“Most people wait until more advanced symptoms occur to see a vein specialist because they think of varicose veins as a cosmetic problem or their primary care physician tells them there’s nothing to worry



From left to right:
Dr. John Lee
Dr. Makku Sivia
Dr. Son Ha Yu



about, which can be true,” Dr. Yu says. “And guys often ignore varicose veins more often than women.”

Over the past 25 years, both diagnosis and treatment have come a long way. Today patients are assessed with ultrasound images that give the doctors a highly accurate view of how well the veins are working or not working.

Today there are more advanced and minimally invasive ways of treating the varicose veins. While compression stockings were the norm in the past and are still used with radio frequency or laser ablation, new options offer less painful solutions.

Now there is a revolutionary procedure known as VenaSeal, offered exclusively at Desert Vein and Vascular Institute.

VenaSeal is an office procedure that uses a local anesthetic to numb a tiny incision area near the knee. A small catheter is inserted and using ultrasound, is guided to the diseased vein to deliver the VenaSeal. The procedure takes 20 to 30 minutes per vein treated.

Patients only need only a Band-aid applied to the puncture site and can immediately return to all activities.

“We had one patient who was on the golf course that afternoon,” Dr. Sivia says.

For spider veins, the small surface veins that often appear as blue or purple threadlike blotches on the legs, Dr. Yu offers sclerotherapy injections using the sclerosant Asclera. “Polidocanol is the best sclerosant with the least amount of associated risk.”

Desert Vein and Vascular Institute offers free varicose vein assessments in their offices in Rancho Mirage and soon in their new office in Palm Springs that opens in September 2016. Both doctors also have surgical privileges at Eisenhower Hospital, Desert Regional hospital, and JFK hospital.

For anyone concerned about their varicose or spiders veins, contact Desert Vein and Vascular Institute at 1-800-VARICOSE

(760-827-4267) or go to the website at DesertVeinSpecialists.com.

“I WOULD LIKE TO THANK DR. SIVIA AND YU AND THE NURSES FOR ALL OF THEIR PROFESSIONALISM AND POLITE BEHAVIOR WHILE RECEIVING THE VENEFIT PROCEDURE. THE DOCTORS ARE GENIUSES! THE ENTIRE STAFF IS ALWAYS VERY HELPFUL AND POLITE. I WILL DEFINITELY RECOMMEND THEM TO EVERYONE!”
- VICKI C.

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