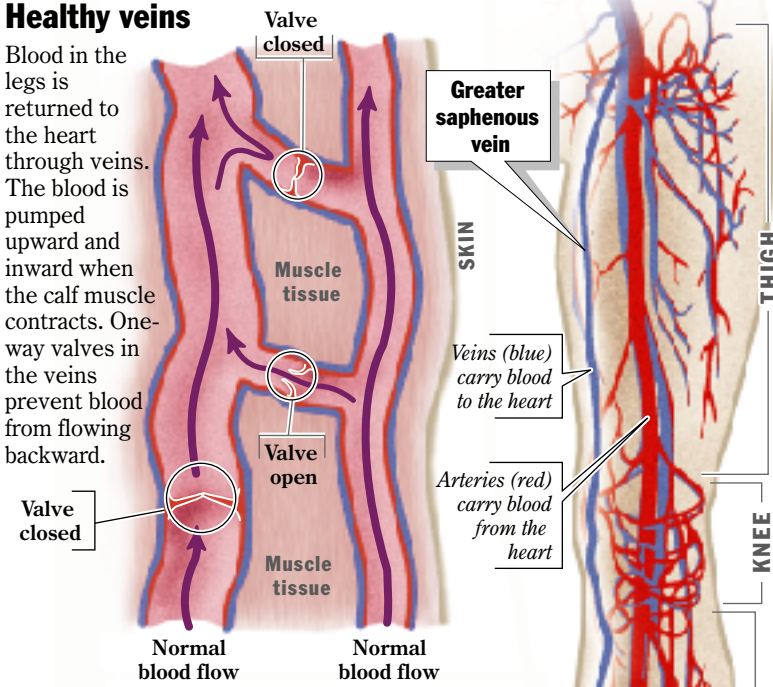


New treatment option for varicose veins

Scientists have developed a new way to treat varicose veins that's less invasive and painful. Energy delivered to the inside of the greater saphenous vein heats the vessel wall and seals it closed.

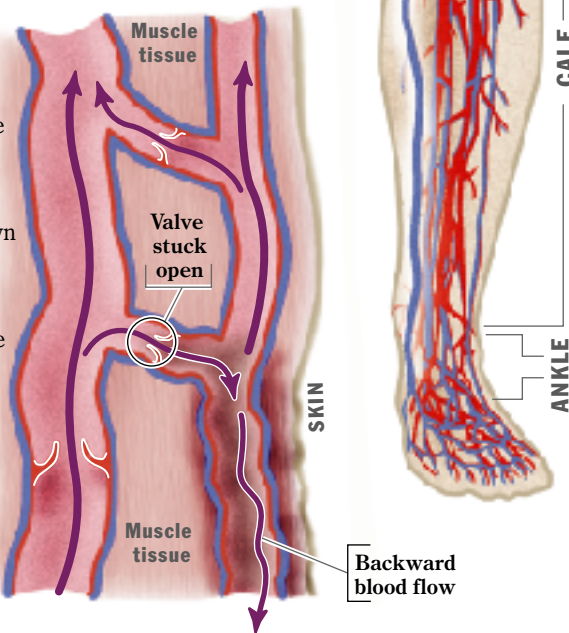
Healthy veins

Blood in the legs is returned to the heart through veins. The blood is pumped upward and inward when the calf muscle contracts. One-way valves in the veins prevent blood from flowing backward.



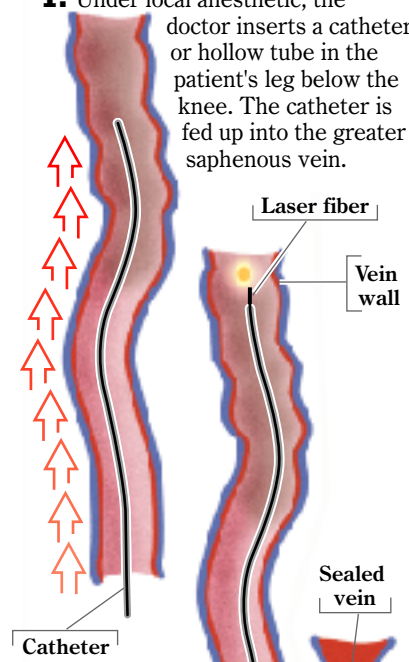
Varicose veins

Varicose veins occur when a valve is damaged or blocked open, allowing blood to flow backward down the leg where it pools. The pooling blood increases pressure inside the veins, causing them to enlarge. Other effects of pooling blood include swelling in the ankles, leg pains, itchy skin and skin discoloration. Over time, leg ulcers may occur.

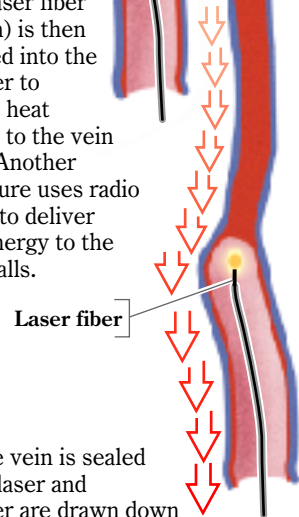


Endovenous ablation

1. Under local anesthetic, the doctor inserts a catheter or hollow tube in the patient's leg below the knee. The catheter is fed up into the greater saphenous vein.



2. A laser fiber (shown) is then inserted into the catheter to deliver heat energy to the vein walls. Another procedure uses radio waves to deliver heat energy to the vein walls.



3. The vein is sealed as the laser and catheter are drawn down the vein. Over time, the sealed vein shrivels until it can't be found.