



Doctors from Lourdes Cardiology Services treat varicose veins with effective laser therapy.

Venus Vein Center

By **Liz Hunter** Photography by **Jim Roesse**

Approximately 40 percent of women and 25 percent of men in the U.S. are affected by varicose veins—visibly protruding veins under the skin—caused by venous insufficiency or impaired blood flow in the legs. Valves in the leg veins carrying blood may become damaged, forcing blood to flow backward down the legs, which puts increased pressure on the vein walls. When blood is not properly pumped through the vein, it can pool, leading to varicose veins and other skin imperfections.

Several factors in a person's medical history or lifestyle can make them more prone to varicose veins. Those include: heredity, gender, pregnancy, age, obesity, hormone levels, smoking and prolonged standing at work. It is not just the cosmetic appearance of bulging or purple veins—also called spider veins—on their legs that people have to endure. They can also suffer from pain, aching, cramping, tiredness, burning and tingling sensations, swelling, throbbing and itching. If left untreated, more serious health problems can develop, such as inflammation (phlebitis), superficial or deep blood clots (DVT), skin color changes, ankle sores, skin ulcers and bleeding.

The good news is that for most people, these symptoms are completely treatable. The Venus Vein Center in Voorhees was created by Associated Cardiovascular Consultants (ACC)—a leading provider of cardiovascular care in the southern part of New Jersey and the surrounding Delaware Valley since 1994. Because of their advanced skills and research, the Venus Vein Center was founded in 2006 to offer state-of-the-art vascular care to the public, both medically necessary and cosmetic treatments. Last year, ACC became an affiliate of Lourdes Health System and is now part of Lourdes Cardiology Services.

The importance of having an experienced physician treat varicose veins cannot be understated, according to Venus Vein Center Medical Director Dr. Nasser Chaudhry, FACC. He joined ACC in 1997, is certified in cardiovascular diseases by the American Board of Internal Medicine and is a Fellow of the American College of Cardiology, as well as certified



CLOCKWISE: Chaudhry performs sclerotherapy on a patient, Dr. Anthony Smeglin, Varicose veins before and after laser treatment

in nuclear cardiology and has certification by the American Board of Echocardiology. He is also a member of the American College of Phlebology. He is joined by Dr. Anthony G. Smeglin, who is certified in interventional cardiology, internal medicine and cardiovascular diseases by the American Board of Internal Medicine. He is also certified in nuclear cardiology by the Certification Board of Nuclear Cardiology, and is a Registered Physician in Vascular Interpretation (RPVI).

Chaudhry explains, "The laser procedure performed at the Venus Vein Center is EVLT (endovenous laser therapy). EVLT is a minimally invasive, safe and effective treatment. It works by treating the vein problem at the source by delivering the right wavelength of laser energy to just the right area, causing the vein to shut down over time." There can be a noticeable difference—a vein can go from being visibly bulging and twisted pre-laser treatment to near invisible post-procedure during a period of 4-6 weeks.

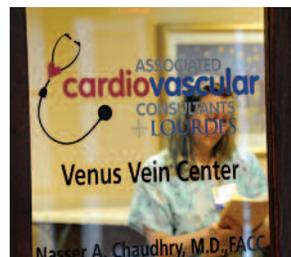
EVLT is not used purely for cosmetic reasons. Medically it seals veins to prevent reflux and therefore improve how legs feel and prevents future problems. The procedure is performed in-office under local anesthesia with little to no scarring. "The recovery is rapid with minimal or no side effects. Following the procedure, a bandage or compression stocking is placed on the treated leg. Patients are able to walk immediately after the procedure and most are able to return to work the next day," says Chaudhry. Prior to the advancement in laser therapy technology, surgery would have been the common practice for serious cases. Chaudhry says this direct, catheter-based approach is virtually painless and produces better results. EVLT is FDA-approved.

Another treatment option available at the Venus Vein Center is sclerotherapy, which involves an injection of solution directly into the veins, over time causing the vessel to fade from view. Spider veins respond to sclerotherapy in three to six weeks, and larger veins re-



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spond in three to four months.

Venus Vein Center offers patients a warm and welcoming treatment environment. Ultrasound technicians and the nursing staff have years of experience and are dedicated to giving patients the attention and follow-up they deserve. Referrals may not be required and patients can call at any time for an appointment to discuss their options with the doctors on staff. **LW**