

# VEIN CENTER OF VENTURA

## Managing Your Venous Insufficiency

If you have been diagnosed with venous insufficiency you may be able to improve your symptoms by incorporating several of the following measures into your lifestyle:

1. **Exercise** – particularly of the lower extremities can improve venous return of blood to the heart. Ideally, this would include weight bearing activities that include ankle flexion for at least 30 minutes daily. (Walking, running, stair master, biking, dance or aerobic movement) You may need to work up to the goal by starting with just 5 minutes daily.
2. **Ankle flexion** – flexing and extending the ankles periodically during periods of immobility can mimic walking movements and lower venous pressure. If you are sedentary during the day flex and extend ankles 5-10 times every few minutes, and walk 1-2 minutes every thirty minutes of sitting.
3. **Leg elevation** – raising the feet above the level of the heart for 15 – 30 minutes several times per day may reduce symptoms of venous insufficiency, particularly edema.
4. **Weight loss** – even moderate weight loss can dramatically reduce symptoms, and slow development of new varicose and spider veins. Excess weight limits movement and increases venous pressure.
5. **Use compression stockings** – Graduated compression, which means maximum pressure at the ankle which decreases as it goes up the leg assists the veins in several ways. It reduces the diameter of the veins, improves lymphatic flow, reduces reflux and venous congestion, all of which lead to inflammation which causes pain and swelling. Consistent use of medical grade compression stockings can improve symptoms and prevent worsening of your venous disease. We recommend Class II compression which is equivalent to 30-40 mm Hg for most patients.
6. **Anti-inflammatory medicines** – Medicines like ibuprofen can reduce inflammation and treat the pain caused by venous insufficiency. Medicine should be taken as indicated on package directions, and used in conjunction with the other measures described here. Be sure to ask your doctor or pharmacist if taking ibuprofen is safe with other medications you are taking and medical conditions you have.

By incorporating these measures you can improve your vein function and reduce symptoms. Depending on the severity of your disease you may be able to postpone or avoid surgery.