

Vein Disease Is *Not Just* a Disease of the Elderly and Actually Is Inherited

My understanding of vein disease, and that of my physician peers, was about the same as the general public's when I first began to practice medicine. It was essentially that varicose veins and venous hypertension were an older person's disease and in the decade before someone retired, they would begin to experience varicose veins and then have them for the rest of their life. Much of what I believed about varicose veins was predicated on that long ago misunderstanding.

Now that the science of veins and vein disease has become a Board Certified medical specialty (Phlebology), the facts of the matter are known to be quite different. *Vein disease is predominantly genetically inherited* and actually begins to manifest, although not always visibly, in the mid – to late-teen years.

It is important to know this for several reasons. Early evaluation of venous flow in the legs

of young adults, whose parents have vein disease or varicose veins, *can prevent decades of suffering*. The genetic chance of inheriting varicose vein disease from one parent with known disease is about 40 percent; if both parents have the problem, it can jump to almost 90 percent!

I have successfully treated 15- to 20-year-olds in my practice, who already had *advanced* vein disease. When treated proactively, even before varicose veins develop, almost a lifetime of pain, fatigue, swelling, cramping, and poor blood flow can be avoided, not to mention the prevention of cosmetic issues. Moreover, younger women can also avoid the sometimes debilitating pain and complications of blood clots during pregnancy via the same proactive screening.

THE MODERN TREATMENT OF VEIN DISEASE

In previous generations having to live with chronic vein disease was almost taken for granted. That's because in those days treatments for varicose veins required anesthesia, a two-hour surgical intervention in a hospital, significant post-operative discomfort and were only successful about 50 percent of the time. And there was often a recurrence. No wonder many chose to live with the pain instead of having the surgery.

Modern treatment methods, however, are safer, almost pain free, far more successful—at a rate approaching 100 percent, and performed in a doctor's office with virtually no recurrence.

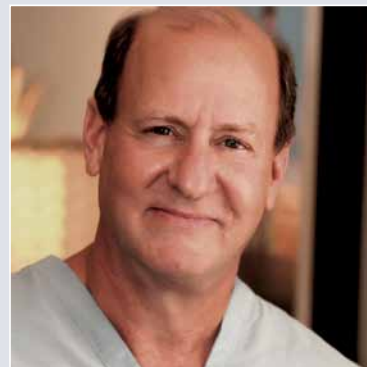
DR. RIVARD'S PHILOSOPHY: I can't think of a better career than medicine for someone, like myself, who's been intellectually curious as long as I can remember. The complexity of the human body that ages and changes over time and acts in an environment that may contain dangers like disease and accidents – what a wonder! What could be more challenging than puzzling out what's going on when a patient presents? The diagnosis we make is based on knowledge and experience, the information they provide and the testing that we do. What fun! And then I get to live a life of service to others by intervening and making the patient healthier than they were when we first met. If there is a better way to live, I don't know of it.

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Stephen Rivard, MD, ACEP, RPhS, FACEP is the Founder and Medical Director of Illinois Vein Specialists, SC, a Center of Excellence in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Vein Disease™, located in Lake Barrington, IL.

Dr. Rivard holds double Board Certification in Phlebology (the study of vein disease) and Emergency Medicine and he is also Certified in Ultrasonography, the key diagnostic technology employed in both diagnosing and treating vein disease.

As a member of the first group of physicians to be Board Certified in Phlebology, he has pioneered in the development of this new field of medicine and has treated thousands of patients. That's why he is a much sought after trainer of new phlebologists and, as the implications of vein disease have become better understood by the medical profession, Dr. Rivard has also become the region's go to diagnostician for anomalous medical findings.

His education and training include: B.S., Loyola University, Cum Laude with honors; M.D., Loyola University; Residency, Emergency Medicine, Butterworth Hospital, MI.; and Fellowship in Phlebology. Dr. Rivard carries the following Board Certifications: Diplomate, American Board of Phlebology; Diplomate, American Board of Emergency Medicine; and Fellow, American College of Emergency Medicine. He is also certified in Vascular Ultrasonography – the key diagnostic tool in diagnosing and treating varicose and spider veins.