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Varicose vein-free thanks to Holy Redeemer's pain-free procedure

(MEADOWBROOK, PA) – Elaine Cochrane from Southampton thought her varicose veins were unsightly—the color of a black eye and bulging in twists and tangles from underneath the skin, around her calf and thigh. And to complicate things further, the swelling caused pain and discomfort. However, apprehensive about the long recovery and possible pain from surgery, Cochrane dismissed treatment.

Says Cochrane: “There were days when I couldn’t wait to take off my shoes because of the swelling. And forget about wearing stockings—it had become just too painful over the years. But I still didn’t want to go through surgery until my mother pushed me to see a doctor. Her varicose veins worsened, and she didn’t want the same thing to happen to me.”

Heeding her mother’s warning, Cochrane met with Dr. Kourosch Ghalili, a cardiothoracic surgeon at Holy Redeemer.

Says Dr. Ghalili: “Even when patients can tolerate the pain and the unattractive appearance of varicose veins, there are underlying health risks that need medical attention.”

Varicose veins develop when faulty valves in the veins do not properly return blood from the leg back to the heart. Rather, the blood flows in the opposite direction—down the leg—and overfills, pools, and builds pressure. Thus, veins bulge, twist, and become enlarged, causing pain. The condition may become severe, produce additional swelling, and result in venous claudication, bursts of pain when walking. It will only get worse, if left untreated.

For Cochrane’s condition, Dr. Ghalili recommended endovenous laser therapy. Unlike vein stripping, a traditional surgical procedure, this type of therapy requires a local anesthetic, takes less than an hour, promises a quick recovery, is less invasive, and beats the bulge. Insurance companies may cover the procedure if the condition meets insurance guidelines deemed medically necessary, not cosmetic.

“The entire procedure is performed in the physician’s office and the patient is awake the whole time,” says Dr. Ghalili.

“I simply deliver targeted laser energy through a small puncture in the diseased vein, which shrinks, then disappears. Healthier veins will continue to deliver blood back to the heart.”

Post-procedure, Cochrane returned to her normal activities and wore a compression stocking for a week. Her varicose veins gradually faded with time.

Says Cochrane: “Surprisingly, I was pain-free during and after the procedure. I didn’t even need to pop an aspirin. It just goes to show ... always listen to your mother.”

The Cardiovascular Center at Holy Redeemer offers an experienced team of cardiologists, interventional radiologists, vascular surgeons, nurses and technologists who provide advanced care and deliver the best outcomes for patients. They are highly experienced in treating complex cardiovascular conditions, from blocked coronary arteries to deep vein thrombosis and delivering advanced life-saving procedures such as angioplasty and stent placement. The center also offers state-of-the-art equipment for diagnosing and treating cardiac and peripheral vascular conditions. And as a member of the Temple Heart Network, the center is backed by the collaborative resources and facilities of an academic medical center. For more information about heart health, please call 1-800-818-4747 or visit www.heartatholyredeemer.com.

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