How to treat it?

- **Rest** — Dull ache and swelling of the lower limbs can often be relieved with periodic resting and leg elevation.

- **Compression therapy** — Wearing elastic stocking or applying elastic bandage to the affected lower limb can increase its venous blood return.

- **Injection treatment** — Injection of sclerosant to obliterate the dilated veins.

- **Surgery** — If severe, the involved veins can be removed by stripping, excision or ligation.

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**Conclusion**

Lower limb varicose vein is a “work-related disease”. Although work is only one of the many risk factors in the development of the disease, the chance of getting this disease can be minimized by eliminating the health hazards at work, reducing the associated risks, and adopting appropriate preventive measures.

**Occupational Health Clinics of the Labour Department**

- Kwun Tong Occupational Health Clinic: 2343 7133
- Fanling Occupational Health Clinic: 3843 5701

**Enquiries**

For enquiries on this pamphlet or advice on occupational health and hygiene matters, please contact the Occupational Safety and Health Branch of the Labour Department through:

- Telephone: 2622 4041
- Fax: 2851 7049
- Email: emplphy@labour.gov.hk

Information on the services offered by the Labour Department and on major labour legislation can also be found on our website: [www.labour.gov.hk](http://www.labour.gov.hk)

**Complaints**

If you have any complaints about unsafe workplace and practices, please call the Labour Department’s Occupational Safety and Health Complaint Hotline at 2542 2172. All complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence.

[Work-related disease series Lower Limb Varicose Vein]
What is lower limb varicose vein?

It presents as dilated, tortuous and swollen veins over the lower limbs. It is mainly due to defective function of the valves of the veins or intrinsic weakness of the venous wall.

Causes
- Personal factors e.g. pregnancy, overweight, gender (more common in female)
- Family history of varicose veins
- Prolonged standing or sitting that increases the venous pressure in the lower limbs
- Other factors e.g. as a complication of thrombophlebitis of the lower limbs

Symptoms and signs
- Dilated veins over the lower limbs without any symptom initially
- Skin thickening of the affected areas, heavy sensation and dull ache of the affected leg, ankle swelling
- Complications such as oozing, bleeding and ulceration in the affected areas

Which occupations have a higher risk?
Sales personnel, cook, teacher and nurse etc.

How to prevent it?

1. Avoid standing at work or prolonged walking
   - Arrange intermittent sitting for employees, such as 10-15 minutes break for 2-3 hours continuous standing work or perform lower limb exercises.
   - Move around after prolonged sitting or standing in order to enhance venous blood return from the lower limbs.
   - Flexible work arrangement allows employees to relieve lower limbs fatigue.

2. Reduce pressure in the lower limbs
   - Maintain desirable body weight
   - As far as reasonably practicable, provide a suitable work chair or a chair for occasional sitting at the working location for the employee standing at work.
   - If your work requires prolonged standing, shift your weight from one leg to another from time to time, or rest your legs alternately on foot-rest or foot-rest.

3. Suitable exercises

First Series
1. Sit properly with your feet on the floor. Straighten your right leg and keep it at the horizontal level. Move the right foot back and forth 5 times.
2. Repeat the above movements with the left leg.

Second Series
1. Raise one leg while sitting. Rotate your foot outward 10 times.
2. Then rotate your foot inward 10 times.
3. Repeat the above movements with the other leg.