Varicose Veins

Veins contain valves that keep blood from flowing backward as a result of gravity. When these valves become too weak, blood pools in the veins and causes them to bulge. These enlarged vessels are called varicose veins. Standing and sitting for long periods of time, lack of exercise, obesity, and pregnancy all tend to promote the formation of varicose veins. Sometimes varicose veins are painful. Elevating the affected leg usually brings significant relief.

Lifestyle changes that may be helpful:
Keeping the legs elevated relieves pain. People with varicose veins should avoid sitting or standing for prolonged periods of time and should walk regularly.

Herbs that may be helpful:
The treatment of varicose veins is essentially the same as for chronic venous insufficiency. Refer to that section for further information.

Although witch hazel is known primarily for combating hemorrhoids, it may also be useful for varicose veins.[1, 2] Application of a witch hazel ointment three or more times per day for two or more weeks is necessary before results can be expected.

Horse chestnut can be used both internally and as an external application for disorders of venous circulation, including varicose veins.[3] Preliminary studies in humans have shown that 300 mg three times per day of a standardized extract of horse chestnut can produce some benefit on one aspect of varicose veins.[4]

Bilberry supports normal formation of connective tissue and strengthens capillaries; these effects might be expected to be of value for the prevention of varicose veins. Butcher’s broom and gotu kola are additional herbs that can be helpful for varicose veins.

Are there any side effects or interactions?
Refer to the individual herb for information about any side effects or interactions.

References: