

## Vascular Surgery – treatment for arterial and venous disorders

### Introduction

Vascular Surgery is a specialty that focuses on a broad range of conditions affecting the circulatory system, specifically the arteries (blood vessels that carry blood away from the heart) and veins (blood vessels that carry blood back to the heart). Arterial problems can involve blockages, causing a lack of blood to different parts of the body, or swelling of the arteries (known as aneurysms), which can burst and be a major threat to life. Major trauma can also involve damage to blood vessels, often requiring urgent surgical repair. Venous conditions present in a wide variety of ways, including varicose veins and related complications (including skin damage and ulcers) and blood clots (deep vein thrombosis). Modern vascular treatments involve medicines, keyhole procedures (angioplasty or stents) and open vascular surgery. The

### Guidance for Patients

Most vascular conditions present gradually over a long period of time. Symptoms may have gradually developed and progressed over many years in some cases. For conditions such as aneurysms, there may be no symptoms at all as any procedures are performed to prevent future complications and problems rather than to ameliorate current symptoms. Some vascular conditions are more urgent, and treatment should be provided within a prescribed period due to the time-sensitive nature of the problem. Specific examples include treatment of narrowed carotid arteries (arteries in the neck that carry blood to the brain) in patients who have had a stroke, or procedures to improve blood flow to the legs of patients with critical limb-threatening ischaemia. In general, the service has continued to prioritise these cases to ensure that time-sensitive vascular problems are treated as quickly as possible.

The Vascular Surgery team cover a large geographical area and patients may be seen in hospitals other than Addenbrooke's Hospital. While appointments may be arranged in neighbouring hospitals, the treatment is managed in a coordinated manner, with Vascular Surgeons from Addenbrooke's Hospital visiting other regional hospitals.

### What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If you notice a deterioration in your symptoms (whether related to an arterial or venous problem), please get in touch with the Vascular Surgery team to let us know. This will allow the team to prioritise cases appropriately. It should be noted that many vascular conditions do fluctuate in terms of symptoms from day to day.

In case of severe deterioration (such as the development of severe pain, or development of gangrene of the toes / foot or ulcers of the leg) please contact us urgently, or seek other medical help (including calling NHS 111 or 999 if an emergency).

### Contact Us

Please contact the **Medical secretary** of the Consultant looking after you or

**Vascular specialist nurses** [vascularspecialistnu@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:vascularspecialistnu@addenbrookes.nhs.uk) or 01223 596382