What’s NEW at RMVC?

You can follow our daily/weekly updates on activities taking place at our Bozeman, Billings and Cody offices. You can post a question for other readers or find out what others think about the procedures and treatment options.

Patient Care Our Focus

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter. Whether you are an existing patient, a physician, or a potential patient, I hope that our dedication to partnering with you is clearly evident in what I share with you here and in everything that we do.

If there is one message I want to convey, it’s that you don’t have to live with the painful symptoms and debilitating lifestyle effects of vein disease. It is not a natural part of aging, but rather a disease that can be treated and managed so that you don’t have to compromise your active lifestyle. You must understand that vein disease, which used to be thought of as purely a cosmetic concern, is really a serious health issue. The sooner your symptoms are recognized and treated, the better the long-term outcome of vein disease for you. More importantly, when left untreated, vein disease can cause serious complications, including; inflammation (phlebitis), blood clots, tissue loss, bleeding, external sores, and ulcers.

We have created a comprehensive educational website, www.rockymountainveinclinic.com that will help you to learn more about the symptoms of vein disease, the latest treatments available, and long-term care plans. I have also included webinars with Power Point presentations about vein disease, as well as videos of actual procedures being done. Our hope is that when you understand your symptoms and see the actual treatments being done, you will realize how easy it is to get your lifestyle back. We also want you to know something about us before you come, so you will find biographies of our highly skilled staff, photos of our facilities, and can read about our guiding philosophy. If you don’t find what you’re looking for, or just have a question, please call us or email us. We try to make ourselves as accessible as possible and myself, or one of my highly skilled staff, will be happy to answer your questions.

Another way that we’re trying to educate and reach out to our patients and physicians in the region is by attending local health fairs. These past few months we’ve been to Butte, Ennis, Big Timber, and Plentywood, Montana, as well as Thermopolis, Powell, and Worland, Wyoming. This is a great opportunity for you to talk to our physicians one-on-one in a non-clinic environment, discuss your symptoms, and get an initial vein screening. This saves you from having to drive up to five hours or more for the same care. We hope that you will continue to take advantage of these events as we bring our experts to you.

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Patient Care Our Focus

Please let us know if there’s any other way we can serve you, as well. We are happy to come to your location and put on a seminar for physicians or local groups seeking information on vein disease.

Our new office in Bozeman is going gang-busters and our home-grown staff and highly-talented clinic director, Dr. Seu are really enjoying providing you the very best in vein care. While we continue to grow from our office in Cody, to doubling our office size in Billings, and adding Bozeman, our philosophy remains the same – to partner with our patients in their care and to provide the very best vein care treatment available in a comfortable, relaxed environment. All of our facilities have been designed to help you to relax as much as possible while receiving care with us.

This past year we also began what proved to be a very successful rural outreach program in Sidney, Montana. Each month, we visit Sidney and set up a clinic for patients to discuss their symptoms, learn about the treatments available, and go through a pre-screening which includes an ultrasound. This allows us to confirm the existence of vein disease prior to scheduling an appointment for them to receive care in Billings, saving them considerable expense and time.

Venous Stasis Dermatitis Symptoms & Treatment

Venous: related to veins. Stasis: slower sluggish flow of blood from the lower legs back to the heart, and lungs. Dermatitis: rash, redness, thick or flaky skin.

Stasis dermatitis is a common disorder of the legs characterized by inflammation and sluggish venous flow. The valves in the veins do not work right and allow blood to flow towards the feet, instead of towards the heart. It is often in association with varicose veins, lower leg swelling, red or brown skin color changes, or lipodermatosclerosis (dark brownish discoloration with skin texture changes where the skin of the lower leg is rigid and leathery feeling).

In this article we will discuss a brief overview of the processes that contribute to dermatitis, the common symptoms, complications, and treatment of stasis dermatitis.

Contributing Factors

- Vein blood moving towards the feet, also called reflux, results in increased pressure in the small vessels. The result is both fluid and cells may “leak” out of the capillaries. The red cells break down and the hemosiderin inside leaks out. Hemosiderin contains iron, stains the skin, and leads to skin color changes. The fluid causes swelling. The other cells cause inflammation.

- It is a little more common in women than in men. It is estimated that more than 6% of patients over the age of 65 have some stasis dermatitis.
Common Symptoms

- The skin appears thin, brown/red and tissue-like, with possible skin lesions (circular flat patches)
- Red patches of skin or entire lower leg is red
- The skin may be weak with open sores in areas
- Legs, ankles, or other areas may become swollen
- Itching and/or leg pains
- Sometimes pain may persist from swollen tissues and may feel like “stabbing” or “needle pricks”

The cracks and poor skin-condition of this disorder sets the leg up for the entry of bacterial and skin infection. If the skin condition deteriorates further and breaks down, a venous ulcer (also known as a stasis ulcer) may form.

Complications

- **Autosensitization**: the development of widespread skin rash or distant skin rash due to the inflammatory changes in the leg.
- **Contact sensitization**: patients with venous stasis dermatitis are at increased risk for developing contact dermatitis. A separate allergic reaction from stasis dermatitis.
- **Super infection**: secondary bacterial infection from scratching and breaking the skin barrier is more common in patients with venous stasis dermatitis.

Treatment

- **General measures to reduce leg swelling and elevated pressure in the leg would include leg elevation, daily walking, exercise, weight reduction.**
- **Continuous compression therapy** (wearing medical graduated compression stockings while up during the day).
- **Skin care**—moisturizing, cleaning (using mild non-soap cleansers to remove scale, bacteria, and crusts).
- **Lubrication** to provide a film of oil to lubricate the skin, which limits dryness and itching. White petroleum jelly is effective, inexpensive, and non-sensitizing.
- **Topical steroids** ointments that reduce itching, and inflammation.
- **Oral steroids** in severe cases that do not respond to topical steroids.
- **Wet dressings** help to remove crusted skin and to reduce itching.
- **Treatment of super infection with appropriate antibiotic**.
- **The most important component of treatment would involve treating the source of the problem which is “venous insufficiency”**.

**Treatment includes:**

Compression stockings and minor surgical procedures to close bad veins. The cells and fluid do not leak out of the veins and cause stasis dermatitis after they are closed. There are many ways to “close” bad veins. For further information, please visit: [www.rockymountainveinclinic.com](http://www.rockymountainveinclinic.com)
Patient Portal: Access Your Records 24/7

In a continued effort to allow our patients to become more active participants in their care, we have updated our patient portal. Each individual patient will have access to their medical records including office visits, ultrasound reports, and operative summaries through this secure portal. Patients will also have the ability to send a secure message to our clinic through the portal’s online messaging. Access to the portal is available through our website at [www.rockymountainveinclinic.com](http://www.rockymountainveinclinic.com).

Records and messaging can be accessed by clicking on the appropriate patient portal link (Billings & Cody or Bozeman) and entering the patient’s unique user name and password that is provided to them at their initial office visit.