

Does endovenous ablation aid healing of venous leg ulcers?

Clinical Question	How safe and effective is superficial endovenous ablation on the healing and recurrence of venous leg ulcers?
Bottom Line	<p>There is high-certainty evidence that endovenous ablation in combination with compression therapy is associated with reduced ulcer healing time compared with compression therapy alone, or compression with deferred endovenous treatment.</p> <p>In association with this, there is also moderate-certainty evidence suggesting that, when compared with compression alone, or compression with deferred endovenous treatment, endovenous ablation in combination with compression is probably associated with a higher number of ulcers healed at 90 days. An economic analysis based upon one study found moderate-certainty evidence demonstrating that endovenous ablation is probably a cost-effective treatment for venous leg ulcer at one year</p>
Caveat	The studies may be clinically skewed in favour of the control arm, as the healing rates in the control groups were much higher than those previously reported in real world data, but this has the benefit of adding considerable confidence to the validity of the conclusions.
Context	Venous leg ulcers (VLUs) are a serious manifestation of chronic venous disease affecting up to 3% of the adult population. This typically recalcitrant and recurring condition significantly impairs quality of life, and its treatment places a heavy financial burden upon healthcare systems. The longstanding mainstay treatment for VLUs is compression therapy. Surgical removal of incompetent veins reduces the risk of ulcer recurrence. However, open surgery is an unpopular option amongst people with VLU, and many people are unsuitable for it. The efficacy of the newer, minimally-invasive endovenous techniques has been established in uncomplicated superficial venous disease, and these techniques can also be used in the management of VLU. When used with compression, endovenous ablation aims to further reduce pressure in the veins of the leg, which may impact ulcer healing.
Cochrane Systematic Review	Cai PL, Hitchman LH, Mohamed AH, Smith GE, Chetter I, Carradice D. Endovenous ablation for venous leg ulcers. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2023, Issue 7. Art. No.: CD009494. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD009494.pub3. This review contains 2 trials with a total of 506 participants.

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Systematic review link:

<https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD009494.pub3/full>