



# Pelvic Congestion Syndrome (PCS)

A minimally invasive treatment option

UNIVERSITY RADIOLOGY



Vascular &  
Interventional Center



## WHAT IS PELVIC CONGESTION SYNDROME?

Pelvic congestion syndrome (PCS) is a painful condition caused by enlarged, varicose veins within the pelvis. It can result in chronic, dull pain, which becomes more intense when standing or sitting for prolonged periods of time. PCS is largely misunderstood and under-diagnosed within the medical community, primarily because the symptoms of PCS are often confused with other conditions. When PCS goes undiagnosed, it can lead to great frustration on the part of the patient.

## WHAT CAUSES PCS?

Chronic pelvic pain affects about one third of all women at some point in their lives, and about 15 percent of women have pelvic varicose veins, mostly during their childbearing years. PCS symptoms can range from mild pain and discomfort to disabling pain that interferes with work, quality of life and everyday activities.

The valves within the pelvic veins weaken and do not close properly causing blood to flow backwards into the vein and pool there, enlarging the veins and creating pressure.



## HOW DO I KNOW IF OVE IS RIGHT FOR ME?

Ovarian vein embolization is recommended for patients who:

- Have symptomatic pelvic congestion syndrome
- Diagnostic imaging has confirmed the presence of pelvic varicose veins
- Medication (hormone therapy) has not been effective at treating PCS
- Other conditions, such as pelvic inflammatory disease, endometriosis, fibroids and other causes of pain have been ruled out
- Do not wish to have surgery

## **ADDITIONAL SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:**

- Noticeable, bulging veins around the labia, vulva, buttocks or thighs
- Painful or abnormal menstrual cycles
- Pain during or after intercourse
- Abdominal bloating or cramping
- Vaginal discharge
- Lower back pain
- Depression or mood swings

These symptoms are also associated with many other conditions—including endometriosis, inflammatory disease and irritable bowel syndrome.

## **HOW IS PCS DIAGNOSED?**

A CT venogram of the abdomen and pelvis is the preferred method to diagnose PCS. In some cases, a transvaginal ultrasound, a pelvic ultrasound with valsalva (bearing down) or MRI may also be used to diagnose this condition.

## **TREATING PCS**

Women with mild PCS may be treated with hormonal medications. Typically prescribed by a gynecologist, these medications can reduce blood flow within the pelvic veins. If medications are not effective, there are both surgical and non-surgical treatment options.

Venous ligation is a gynecologic surgical approach. It is a complex procedure and can result in scarring and the possibility of varicose veins returning.

Ovarian vein embolization (OVE) is a minimally invasive treatment option. It is a safe and effective outpatient procedure that is effective at providing relief for about 80% of those who undergo it. OVE requires no hospital stay, and patients can return to normal activities within 24 hours.

## THE OVE PROCEDURE

OVE is performed by an interventional radiologist using image guidance and a special catheter to seal off the faulty veins from the inside. During the procedure, the catheter is advanced through the body into the blood vessels in the pelvis. Small metal coils are then inserted to clot the blood and seal the faulty vein. For smaller varicose veins, a special foam agent is injected into the vein to shrink it.

## COMPLICATIONS OF OVE

OVE should only be performed by a trained and experienced interventional radiologist. Complications with this procedure are rare, and can include infection, bruising or bleeding at the catheter insertion site.

## TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT OVE

OVE is an FDA cleared and less invasive option to treat PCS performed by our doctors. If you have been diagnosed with pelvic congestion syndrome, talk with your doctor and share this brochure with them. If you have questions, call us! We are happy to help provide the information that you need to make an informed decision with your doctor.



# University Radiology Vascular & Interventional Center

The doctors of University Radiology Vascular & Interventional Center perform minimally invasive, imaging-guided procedures to treat a growing number of diseases and chronic health conditions. We offer timely, informative consultations with our patients to ensure they have the information they need to make the decision that's right for them. Treatments are performed in our state-of-the-art outpatient center, where patients experience concierge-style service and a comfortable environment.

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