



JOSEPH G. MAGNANT, MD, FACS

Nancy Goldszak says she suffered a lot of pressure in her legs. “They were *very* swollen, especially around my ankles,” confides the active entrepreneur. “I had major cramping and severe pain every night. By the time I would get into bed at the end of the evening, I felt like I had bricks attached to my legs.”

She admits that she had been living with the situation for years: “I would say the significant discomfort began about five years ago, but I let it go, I just let it go.”

“In fact, what finally motivated me to seek help was when my daughter, an athlete who was twenty-four at the time, suffered from severe pain in one of her legs. I took her to a vein specialist, and I sort of tagged along behind her.”

The physician Nancy chose for her daughter is Joseph G. Magnant, MD, FACS, a board-certified vascular surgeon who specializes in vein treatment. His practice, Vein Specialists at Royal Palm Square in Fort Myers, is 100% dedicated to the modern evaluation and treatment of leg vein disorders.

“I mentioned to the doctor that we were here for my daughter, but that I would like him to check me as well,” remembers Nancy. “He took one look at me and said, *Your daughter’s problem is easy. Yours is a little more complicated.*”

**Cankles**

“I have seen many patients with legs looking similar to Nancy’s, where the calf and ankle appear to have merged as one,” observes Dr. Magnant. “My patients self-describe them as Grandma’s ankles, piano legs, or stovepipe legs, to name just a few of their terminologies. Another common term is *cankles*.”

Dr. Magnant explains that, frequently, the most common cause of heavy, swollen ankles is ignored: “Often, doctors identify such causes as pregnancy, obesity, heart failure, or kidney failure. However, one of the most common and treatable underlying causes of cankles is venous insufficiency, or leaky veins, which can be diagnosed scientifically with a painless duplex ultrasound examination by a trained vascular technologist.”

*Venous insufficiency* is defined as the condition in which the valves of the deep and/or superficial veins of the lower extremities no longer function properly in a one-way manner. These valves are either stuck or scarred in the open position, or are floppy and continue to open, or *prolapse*, beyond the closed position. This results in reflux or backward blood flow

# Cankles? Before You Do Anything Else...



As busy co-owner of Pieces, an events planning business in Naples, Nancy says she is thrilled to be pain free: “It’s been the best thing I’ve ever done for myself.”

FHCN PHOTO BY AMANDA SMITH

**The most common and treatable underlying cause of swollen, tubular-shaped ankles, or cankles, is venous insufficiency (leaky veins). A simple evaluation begins with a board-certified vein specialist.**

in the veins, which produces increased hydrostatic pressure in the downstream venous system.

Dr. Magnant says that one of the more evident symptoms of venous insufficiency to watch for when ankles are thick and tubular is if the ankle edema or swelling improves with elevation and if the ankles are significantly less swollen first thing in the morning: “Heavy legs and fatigue-like symptoms are classically worse at the end of the day.”

“Patients suffering with venous insufficiency may have to loosen their shoes as the day progresses, often note restless legs when they lie down at night, and may have to urinate frequently throughout the night. Elevation eventually relieves their discomfort as the fluid in the legs returns to venous circulation at the level of the collarbone where the thoracic lymphatic duct returns the clear serum back into the internal jugular vein. This returned fluid is then processed into urine by the kidneys, stored in the bladder, and often necessitates frequent nighttime trips to the bathroom [nocturnal diuresis]. This straightforward cycle repeats itself daily with increased venous pressure in the ankle area due to leaky vein valves, resulting in seeping of serum out of the thin-walled veins into the surrounding skin and fat, which progresses over the course of the day until elevation and rest are possible.

“Because we spend two-thirds of our twenty-four-hour days upright, and only one-third of it in bed with legs elevated, over the course of many years, the cankles appear more permanent in nature as the

net addition of liquid outpaces the body’s ability to rid itself of the extra water.”

The doctor stresses that venous insufficiency should be considered and ultrasound evaluation completed early in the evaluation process of swollen ankles rather than as a last-ditch effort.

**Treating leg vein disorders**

“Dr. Magnant was able to treat the vein that was giving my daughter so much trouble with injection sclerotherapy, and she’s perfect,” shares Nancy. “At twenty-five, she continues to play soccer and to coach.”

“It took me a little longer to schedule my appointment; I dragged my feet a bit. It’s just me.”

Nancy did schedule her evaluation and treatment, however, and for her Dr. Magnant performed an *endovenous closure*, an in-office procedure which involves

PHOTOS COURTESY OF VEIN SPECIALISTS AT ROYAL PALM SQUARE

**BEFORE**



**AFTER**



**Joseph G. Magnant, MD, FACS**, is a fellow of the American College of Surgeons and is board certified by the American Board of Surgery in vascular surgery. He earned his medical degree from Medical College of Virginia. He completed a general surgery residency at Medical College of Virginia Hospitals and a fellowship in vascular surgery at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, Lebanon, NH. Dr. Magnant of Vein Specialists at Royal Palm Square focuses exclusively on vein

evaluation and modern treatments in a dedicated, outpatient vein-centered facility. Dr. Magnant is an active member of the American College of Phlebology, Society for Vascular Surgery, and Southern Association of Vascular Surgery.

## Don't Wait

Patients with any of the following symptoms might benefit from a thorough venous insufficiency evaluation, including a diagnostic ultrasound, by Vein Specialists at Royal Palm Square:

- Swollen, achy legs
- Restless leg syndrome
- Bulging varicose veins
- Bleeding from spider or varicose veins
- Extreme urination frequency at night
- Impending or open leg ulcers
- Night-time leg cramps
- Thickening and discoloration of skin of the ankles or legs

placing a thin catheter into the faulty vein and then delivering heat energy to the vein wall, causing it to seal shut. The doctor points out that there is no future danger in collapsing the treated vein because it wasn't working properly anyway and other veins have already compensated for the fact that it was not working properly.

“It was just an in-and-out procedure,” reports Nancy. “Dr. Magnant didn't have to put me to sleep, but I was a little groggy. It was just perfect.”

“Now, I feel fabulous. I'm back to exercising and leading my active life.”

“Dr. Magnant is an incredible doctor; I can't imagine a better physician experience. From beginning to end, the place is amazing.”

“The office is set up somewhat like a spa, and Dr. Magnant is the most personable, kindest, most sensitive physician imaginable. He is approachable, yet businesslike. He's just great, and his personality is reflected in every single staff member, from the initial greeter to the operating room personnel. The office is a totally pleasurable experience.” **FHCN**—Kris Kline

**Smooth out your problem veins**

Dr. Magnant welcomes all calls regarding this article as well as other topics related to veins. His office is located at **1510 Royal Palm Square Blvd., Suite 101**, in Fort Myers. Please phone **(239) 694-VEIN (8346)** for more information or to schedule an appointment. Visit his website, [WEKNOWVEINS.COM](http://WEKNOWVEINS.COM), or email him at [info@weknowveins.com](mailto:info@weknowveins.com).

Visit Vein Specialists at Royal Palm Square's newly revised website at [www.weknowveins.com](http://www.weknowveins.com).