What should I do after the procedure?
After endovenous radio frequency therapy, a gauze pad and tape will be placed over the puncture site and a compression stocking or compression bandage will be placed on your leg. You are encouraged to immediately walk following the procedure and resume normal activities. However, during the two weeks following your procedure you should avoid swimming, vigorous gym workouts, hot baths or excessive sun. Following your endovenous radio frequency therapy, your physician will provide customized instructions for you to observe. The instructions will include how long to wear a compression stocking, post-procedure care, scheduling a follow up appointment and contact information for any questions you may have regarding the procedure.

What should I expect after the procedure?
You should expect to see some bruising along the treatment site as the vein disappears, which is normal and should gradually go away within a month. You also may feel some tenderness, tingling, itching or tightness in your treated leg during the two weeks following the procedure. If you experience significant pain, or have bleeding of the treated leg, contact your physician promptly.

How can I get more information on varicose veins?
More information on the causes and treatments of varicose veins can be found at metrohealth.net. As always, for information on your specific condition, ask your physician.
What are varicose veins?
Varicose veins are the large, “rope-like” veins which are often one-quarter inch or larger in diameter.

What causes varicose veins?
Varicose veins occur when veins are not properly returning blood from the lower leg to the heart. All veins have valves that open to allow the flow of blood to the heart and close to prevent backflow (otherwise known as “reflux”) of blood to the foot. When valves fail to function properly, blood leaks through and flows down the leg in the wrong direction. The blood overfills and distends the superficial veins under the skin, resulting in the bulging seen in varicose veins.

The walls and valves of veins are thin and elastic, and can stretch due to a variety of conditions including pregnancy, heredity and age. When varicose veins become severe, it is referred to as chronic venous insufficiency. Symptoms of chronic venous insufficiency include aching pain, swelling, easy leg fatigue and leg heaviness, all of which worsen as the day progresses. Left untreated, chronic venous insufficiency can cause ulcerations which can be very difficult to treat.

How common are varicose veins?
Approximately half of the population has some form of venous disease, and varicose veins affect about one out of two people age 50 and older, and 15-25% of all adults.

How does endovenous radio frequency therapy work?
Previously, treatment of painful, swollen varicose veins required a surgical procedure called vein stripping, where the vein was completely removed from the leg. More recently, endovenous radio frequency therapy has been developed to treat chronic venous insufficiency by delivering radio frequency energy through a small puncture in the leg to close the diseased vein. With endovenous radio frequency therapy, no surgery is required, and the entire procedure can be performed in less than one hour in your physician’s office.

During the procedure, you are awake and numbing medicine is applied to the vein. A thin radio frequency catheter is inserted into the vein. Your physician then will deliver radio frequency energy through the catheter and into the vein, causing the vein to close.

Why is the radio frequency catheter placed in the thigh, when the varicose veins are located below the knee?
Bulging varicose veins in the lower leg usually are caused by a faulty valve located higher in the leg that can’t be seen at the surface. The endovenous radio frequency therapy treats the source of the problem, which then may help the varicose vein in the lower leg to shrink and disappear.

Is the loss of the vein a problem?
No. Because there are many veins in the leg, the blood that would have flowed through the closed vein simply flows through other healthy veins after the radio frequency therapy.

Is endovenous radio frequency therapy painful?
Although individual responses vary, most people report little to no pain associated with endovenous radio frequency therapy. Often the only discomfort felt is when the numbing medicine is applied to the leg. After the procedure you may feel some tenderness, tingling, itching or tightness in the treated leg, which should disappear within a month.

How successful is endovenous radio frequency therapy?
Clinical results have been published which document the success of endovenous radio frequency treatment. Like any medical treatment, however, endovenous radio frequency therapy has certain risks which your physician will explain to you as they apply to your individual case.