

Leg Veins

Leg veins serve to drain bloodflow from the feet, ankles, lower legs, knees, thighs and pelvis to the IVC, which takes blood to the right atrium of the heart. Though every individual has unique venous anatomy, there are general anatomic landmarks and relationships which help delineate the identity of each vein.



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Inferior Vena Cava

Inferior Vine Cave

The inferior vena cava (IVC), also known as the posterior vena cava, is a large vein which carries deoxygenated blood from the lower limbs to the right atrium of the heart. Occlusion to the IVC is a life-threatening situation as it may lead to thrombosis and embolism, as is trauma, which can lead to severe exsanguination.

Common Iliac (Ilium)

Comma Island-bum

The common iliac veins are formed from the external and internal iliac veins, and work to drain blood from the pelvis and lower limbs. These later converge into the inferior vena cava.

External Iliac (Ilium)

Exiting Island-bum

The external iliac veins are large veins which connect the femoral vein to the common iliac veins.

Great Saphenous

Great Sapphire

The great saphenous vein is a superficial, subcutaneous vein which is the longest in the body. It originates at the dorsal vein of the first digit and meets the femoral vein. Clinically, this vein can have thrombophlebitis and varicosities. Often, the great saphenous is used for by vascular and cardiac surgeons for bypass grafts.

Femoral

Femur

The femoral vein is a continuation of the popliteal vein from the adductor canal, and turns into the external iliac vein at the margin of the inguinal ligament. Occlusion of the femoral vein can be life-threatening, and it is often used as a point of entry for IV drug users.

Popliteal

Pope-light

The popliteal vein carries blood from the knee joint, thigh and lower leg to the heart. It is located behind the knee and its origin is defined by the convergence of the anterior and posterior tibial veins. It turns into the femoral vein after passing through the adductor canal.

Small Saphenous

Small Sapphire

The small saphenous is a large, superficial vein of the leg which originates at the dorsal vein of the 5th digit and usually drains into the popliteal vein.

Anterior Tibial

Anteater Tibetan

Humans have two anterior tibial veins, which originate at the dorsalis pedis veins and drain into the popliteal vein. These veins drain the anterior foot, ankle, knee and tibiofibular joint.

Posterior Tibial

Post-terrier Tibetan

There are two posterior tibial veins in humans, which work to drain the posterior compartment and plantar portion of the foot. The posterior tibial veins originate from the plantar veins and meet the anterior tibial veins to form the popliteal vein.