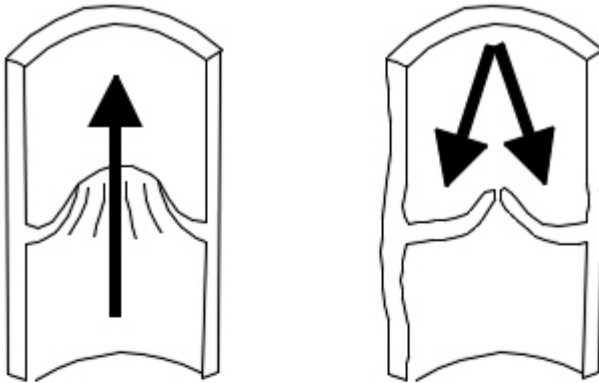
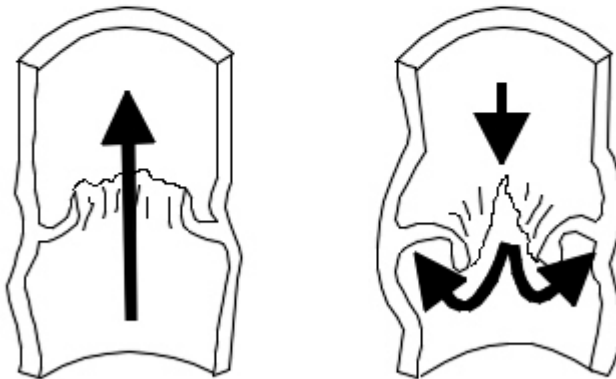


Varicose veins (diagram)



Healthy venous valves

Venous blood flows upward against gravity and any backflow is prevented by valves that shut against the flow



Varicose veins

The valves become damaged and do not function properly. Backflow of blood is not prevented and 'pooling' of blood stretches and balloons the vein walls.

