

Sclerotherapy Information

What are spider veins?

Spider veins or “telangiectasias” are small veins under the skin usually developing from dilated blood channels probably connected with underlying larger veins.

What is Sclerotherapy?

Sclerotherapy is a method of treatment for **spider veins** in which a solution called a “sclerosant” is injected into the veins to cause eventual closing of the vein making it disappear.

Will Sclerotherapy “cure” my spider veins?

The majority of patients having Sclerotherapy will have marked improvement in their visible spider veins. Rarely (approximately 10%) is there poor results with little or no improvement. (“Poor results” means the veins have not totally disappeared after 6 treatments.) Unfortunately, there is no “cure” for your tendency to develop new spider veins with any form of treatment.

How many sessions will I need?

The number of treatments needed to clear or improve the condition differs from patient to patient, depending on the extent of varicose and spider veins present. The average number of treatments is 3 – 4.

What are the possible side effects and/or complications of Sclerotherapy?

The most common side effects experienced with Sclerotherapy include the following:

1. **Hyperpigmentation** – In most patients, the treated veins become darker immediately after treatment. This usually fades in 2 – 4 weeks, however, in rare cases it can persist up to 4 – 12 months or can be permanent (3%).
2. **Matting** – Matting refers to the development of new tiny veins in the treated area, which forms a “mat” of redness. It may occur 2 – 4 weeks after treatment and usually fades within 4 – 6 months. It occurs in up to 18% of women receiving estrogen and in 2 – 4% of all patients.
3. **Trapped blood** – Occasionally, the closing of the treated vein is slow to occur and a small pocket of blood remains as a dark blue clot. This can be removed with a small needle puncture within 2 – 4 weeks after treatment. This condition is NOT a dangerous form of clotting.

4. **Itching** – Mild itching may occur along the treated vein for up to 2 hours after treatment and may persist a day or so. You may take over the counter Benadryl.
5. **Ulceration** – In less than 1% of patients receiving Sclerotherapy, a small blister may form at the injection site, open and become ulcerated. Should this occur, it usually heals within 2 months and the scar eventually returns to normal skin color.
6. **Allergic reaction** – Allergic reactions to the sclerosant are very rare. Such reactions would be mild in the form of skin reaction or hives. Our clinic policy is to use low dose and low concentrations of the sclerosant practically excluding more systemic, serious reactions.
7. **Pain** – An extremely tiny needle is used for injections into the veins and very little discomfort is associated with the actual injection. The veins treated may be tender to touch with mild pain at the injection site. Mild burning or stinging may be experienced immediately following the injections, but usually subsides when hose are applied and walking resumes.
8. **Bruising** – Bruising at the injection sites is very common, but usually disappears by 6 weeks.
9. **Phlebitis** – In less than .1% of patients, swelling of the vein with pain may occur and may cause the ankles to swell. This is not dangerous and usually subsides in a few days.