



What is sclerotherapy?

Sclerotherapy is a non-surgical treatment for varicose and spider veins which is performed in our clinic. Using a tiny needle, medication is injected.

The medication irritates the vein walls so that they stick together and are gradually reabsorbed by the body. Eliminating these diseased veins actually improves the circulation and makes the legs healthier.

What will happen in the first consultation?

You will be asked questions regarding your past health, medication history and symptoms. You will have an opportunity to discuss your condition, the various treatments available and ask any questions. Frequently, the veins can be treated on the same day as the consultation.

What causes vein problems?

Veins carry blood from the legs back to the heart through one-way valve systems. When there is a weakness in the vein wall or a faulty valve, the valve stretches and no longer closes properly. The veins become filled with blood that can't flow, causing pain, swelling, discoloration, sores that won't heal, and occasionally phlebitis, leg ulcers and blood clots. Vein problems are much more common in women, particularly those that stand for a living and/or have had children. Venous disease is also genetically inherited.

How many treatments are required?

Depending on the type and severity of the veins, the average number of treatments is anywhere between 3 and 5. The smaller spider veins may require many points of injection.

Diagnosis & Treatment

Diagnosis starts with a careful history and physical exam. Diagnostic tests are often needed to evaluate the extent of disease. If treatment is indicated, each one treatment takes about 20 minutes. The number of treatments depends on the severity of the problem.

Discomfort after treatment is rare. Most patients leave our office and go directly back to work. We recommend that patients walk for 20 minutes after each treatment.

Insurance Coverage

Spider veins are considered "cosmetic" and therefore do not qualify for most insurance plans. The compression stockings that are recommended are often included in private medical insurance plans.

What are the most common side effects?

All medical treatments entail a certain degree of risk. This will be discussed during your first visit and consent to treatment must be signed before the injections are started. Fortunately, when injections are undertaken by well trained professionals, complications rarely arise.

In the first few days itching, bruising, aching, redness and swelling are common. Most of these symptoms resolve spontaneously. You may take Tylenol (acetaminophen), but do not take ASA or related compounds (aspirin, naproxen, and ibuprofen/Advil) since they may increase bleeding. It may help to elevate the legs and rotate the ankles.

Some patients, (particularly those with fair skin) notice small red circles or brown lines after treatments. These are due to the pigment of blood or inflammation and usually resolve within 1 month. 90% of the discolorations resolve with 1 year.

A superficial blood clot may develop at the injection site which causes a lump. This will disappear in 2-8 weeks. A small superficial ulceration of the skin overlying the injected vessel may occur. It can leave a small scar.

"Matting" refers to the development of new tiny blood vessels in the treated vessel. This temporary phenomenon occurs 2 to 4 weeks after treatment and usually resolves within 4 to 6 months. It occurs in up to 18% of women receiving estrogen therapy (for menopause) and 2 to 4 % of all patients.

You will be monitored at the clinic for an allergic reaction (very rare) which can include hives, shortness of breath and swelling around the airway. If this occurs at home, seek medical attention immediately.

What should I do before a treatment?

- × Do not take aspirin, ibuprofen or other arthritis medicine for 2 days before and after your treatment because these medications can increase bruising, unless prescribed.
- × Do not drink alcoholic beverages or smoke for 2 days before and after your treatment. They may impair healing.
- ✓ Shower and wash your legs thoroughly with an antibacterial soap. Do not shave your legs the day of your appointment. Do not apply any cream or lotion to your legs, including tanning cream.
- ✓ Bring loose fitting shorts to wear during the treatment.
- ✓ Eat a light meal or snack 1 - 1½ hours before your appointment.

What should I do after a treatment?

Your legs will be covered in cotton balls attached with tape, so you are advised to wear dark colored loose-fitting clothing to the session.

Remove the cotton balls after one hour.

Resume normal activities.

Avoid alcohol, ASA, and hot baths and exercise for 48 hours.

What can I do to prevent spider veins from coming back after treatment?

1. Compression stockings are highly recommended and come in a variety of colours and styles. Use them when your legs ache, for long trips or for prolonged walking or standing.

Wearing stockings increases the effectiveness of treatment by 50% and helps to prevent recurrences.

2. Wear comfortable shoes with a 1 - 2 inch heel (running shoes are best).
3. Avoid wearing girdles and ordinary knee-high stockings (they impede circulation)
4. Exercise regularly. Avoid standing for long periods and if you do, flex your muscles or sit/lie down with your legs up periodically. We have a handout on exercises.

Thank you for choosing Halton Medical Aesthetics!

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