



FOX VALLEY  
PLASTIC SURGERY, S.C.

## » Vein Center

# Sclerotherapy



Sclerotherapy is a cosmetic medical procedure used to treat spider veins – the smaller red, blue, and purple veins that form a visible “cobweb” on the skin. During sclerotherapy, medication is injected into the unwanted vein to cause it to close. The medication displaces the blood, causes the vein to appear lighter over time, and irritates the lining, causing it to collapse. Compression hoses create external pressure, keeping the vein closed and prevent blood from flowing to it. Within 1-3 months, the vein is absorbed by the body and disappears.

Sclerotherapy is a well-proven procedure and has been used since the 1930s. After each sclerotherapy session, the veins will appear lighter. The majority of persons who have sclerotherapy performed, will be cleared and/or see improvement. Unfortunately, however, there is no guarantee that sclerotherapy will be effective in every case. Approximately 10% of patients who undergo sclerotherapy have poor to fair results. A poor result occurs when the veins have not totally disappeared. In very rare instances the patient’s condition may become worse after the sclerotherapy treatment.

Anesthesia is not needed. The procedure is not painful, but the individual injections can cause a slight burning sensation that lasts a few seconds.

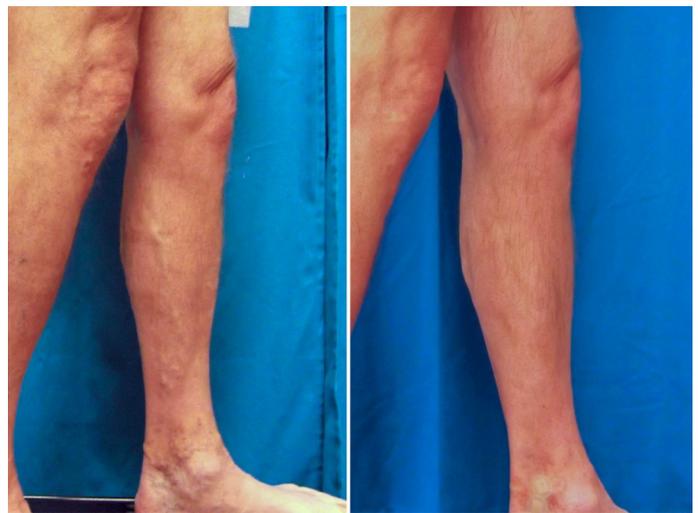
### 1. What should I expect during the procedure?

Sclerotherapy is conducted in the office without the use of anesthesia. The treatment area is cleansed. The provider will guide a fine needle into the vein and inject a treatment solution – a foamed sclerosant for larger veins, and a non-foamed solution for smaller vessels – which causes the veins to collapse and fade from view over time. Mild discomfort may occur when the veins are injected, and a cramping sensation may be felt for 1 to 2 minutes when larger veins are injected.

The number of veins injected in one session is variable, depending on the size and location of the veins, and the patient’s overall medical condition. A typical session is relatively quick, lasting 30 to 45 minutes. Approximately one injection is administered for every inch of spider vein. Patients can receive anywhere from 5 to 40 injections per session. Ultrasound may be used for procedure if the provider feels that ultrasound will allow for a better result.

Sclerotherapy works well for most patients. It is estimated that as many as 50 percent to 80 percent of injected veins may be eliminated with each injection session. A few (less

non-surgical treatment. But, generally speaking sclerotherapy is extremely effective in permanently closing off varicose and spider veins.



than 10 percent) of the people who have sclerotherapy do not respond to the injections at all. In these instances, different solutions or a different method may be tried.

In general, spider veins respond to treatment in 3 to 6 weeks, and larger veins respond in 3 to 4 months. If the veins respond to the treatment, usually they will not reappear. However, new veins may appear over time. If needed, patients may return for additional injections for maintenance.

It is possible for someone with a hereditary predisposition to develop new varicose veins after either surgical or

### 2. What do I need to do before my procedure?

Please do:

- Fill the prescription for **compression stockings**, which gently squeeze the legs to prevent swelling. Bring them on the day of the procedure. Practice putting on the stockings prior to your procedure to become familiar with them.
- Keep the **afternoon or evening free** so that legs can be elevated if the provider feels it is necessary for you.
- You may eat.

- Wear **loose pants, a skirt, or shorts** to the procedure to accommodate the compression hose.

Please don't:

- Do not take **aspirin, ibuprofen** (e.g. Advil and Motrin) or other anti-inflammatory medications for 48 hours before and after sclerotherapy, because these medications may interfere with the action of the sclerosing agent or increase bleeding. Acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol) is permitted.
- Do not take **tetracycline or minocin**, both antibiotics, which may cause staining of the skin if taken 7-10 days before or after sclerotherapy.

### 3. What do I need to do after my treatment?

After the treatment, patients will be able to drive themselves home. **Wear the compression stockings continuously for three days**, removing only to shower – try to keep the bandage dry. Patients may return to normal activities, but must **wait 3 days** before resuming running, aerobic exercise, or biking. **Avoid tanning or sunbathing**, and use sunscreen before sun exposure to the legs.

Showers are permissible. Wash the injection sites with a mild soap and lukewarm water. Avoid direct exposure to sunlight (including sun tanning and tanning beds).

There may be bruising, or the injection site could be tender for a day or so. The legs will

look worse before they look better; however, there will be significant improvement in about a month. Some veins require retreatment, and new varicose or spider veins may form.

### 4. What will my legs feel like?

The injected areas may be warm to the touch, and can become swollen. As the legs begin to heal, the swelling and the lumps may decrease and flare up at certain times – this is a normal occurrence. There may be mild itching, and temporary tenderness and bruising at the injection site. It is normal to experience some painful areas that feel lumpy or bumpy, which may turn red or dark and bruise-like. This may remain for 3-12 months, but over time the areas will decrease in size and the color will fade.

Temporary brownish discoloration is common. It is caused by a pigment released in the skin from veins in the process of disintegrating. These stains take up to several months to fade, depending on the size of the veins, your skin type and your individual healing ability. If this occurs an incision and drainage may be recommended to decrease the size of the vessel and decrease the discoloration.

### 5. What are the possible side effects?

Side effects of sclerotherapy may include:

- Larger injected veins may become lumpy or hard for several months before resolving.
- Raised, red areas may
- appear at the injection sites and should disappear within a few days.
- Brown lines or spots on the skin may be noted at the site of the injection. In most cases, they disappear within 3 to 12 months, but can be permanent about 5 percent of the time. Sometimes, a small amount of blood is trapped, hardens in the vein and looks dark blue or bruised. This area may need to be drained before the next treatment.
- Bruising may occur around the injection site and can last several days or weeks.
- Temporary tiny blood vessels may develop at the treated area. This is called revascularization, "flares," "mats," or "blushing." They may appear days or weeks after the procedure but should fade within a few months and usually do not require further treatment.
- Allergic reactions to the sclerosing agent may occur at the time of the injection, and are rarely serious. Symptoms include itching and swelling.

Other side effects rarely develop after sclerotherapy. Patients with any of these rare side effects, should call the office immediately at 920-233-1540.

- Red streaking, especially in the groin area



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(6/2016)

