

SCLEROTHERAPY OVERVIEW & PRE-TREATMENT/AFTERCARE INSTRUCTIONS

Overview

What are spider veins?

Spider veins (also known as telangiectasias) of the legs are a common problem, particularly affecting women. These small, purple/red veins can form anywhere on the leg, from the top of the thigh to the ankle. Although spider veins do not pose major health problems, they may cause discomfort. Many people who suffer from spider veins also find them unsightly and often attempt to conceal them with clothing or cosmetic cover-ups. Sclerotherapy is an effective treatment to correct unwanted spider veins of the legs.

What is sclerotherapy?

Sclerotherapy is a procedure in which Dr. Lee uses a syringe with a tiny needle to inject a small amount of a solution directly into the spider vein. The solution displaces the blood within the vein thus causing it to blanch or turn white. The solution then causes the vessel to become irritated and swell shut prohibiting the blood from re-entering the vein. Following the injection, a pressure bandage is usually applied to the site to prevent post-injection bleeding and to promote healing. Each spider vein may require several injections and most will disappear within 2 weeks to 2 months after the treatment. The entire procedure usually lasts less than 30 minutes. It is best to refrain from alcohol one week before treatment. Stop all anti-inflammatory medications (i.e. Advil, Motrin, Ibuprofen, etc.) and aspirin 2 weeks before treatment, as this will minimize your chance of bruising with the procedure. If you take aspirin because you have a history of heart disease or stroke, please consult with your primary physician before stopping aspirin.

Is the procedure painful?

Patients who have had sclerotherapy report little discomfort. Some experience a slight to moderate burning sensation immediately after the injection but this disappears within a few seconds.

Are there any side effects following treatment?

Most patients experience no adverse effects; however, some minor side effects have been reported. These include slight blistering that occurs when small amounts of the solution seep into the surrounding skin areas. These blisters tend to heal rapidly. Occasionally, a small, dark area of pigmentation resembling a freckle may remain. These spots usually resolve in time or respond to treatment with bleaching agents. Temporary bruising around the treated area can result if the veins are unusually weak. Small, inconsequential clots can sometimes develop at the site of the injection and are not a cause for major concern. These clots may be removed within 2 weeks in order to allow the healing process to progress normally.

Swelling occasionally occurs particularly in those patients whose jobs require standing or sitting for long periods of time. Although not dangerous, swelling should be treated with elevation and/or compresses.

What causes spider veins?

It remains unknown why some people are affected with spider veins and others are not. There may be a slight familial predisposition to the condition. Trauma, prolonged standing and/or sitting may all possibly contribute to the formation of these veins. More women than men seem to develop this condition perhaps as a result of pregnancy or because of hormones.

Pre-Treatment Instructions

Before your procedure:

1. **DO NOT** shave your legs for 2 days prior to your sclerotherapy appointment.
2. **DO NOT** use blood-thinning substances such as aspirin, ibuprofen and Vitamin E at least two weeks before treatment to decrease your risk of bruising or bleeding. If you take aspirin because you have a history of heart disease or stroke, please consult with your primary physician before stopping aspirin.
3. Avoid excessive sun exposure for 2 weeks before treatment.
4. Eat a light meal 1 hour prior to your appointment.
5. Bring loose-fitting shorts to wear during the procedure.
6. Bring medical-grade, pantyhose-style support hose (compression stockings) with you to your appointment.

Aftercare Instructions

1. You may resume normal activities. Avoid strenuous physical activity such as aerobics, jogging, and heavy lifting for the first 2-3 days after the procedure.
2. **DO NOT** take HOT baths or showers for 2 weeks after the procedure. Luke-warm showers are preferred.
3. Avoid prolonged standing in one position. If you must stand in one place, move your feet or toes frequently or support one foot on a small stool or box.
4. Wear your medical-grade pantyhose-style support hose during the day for 7 days after treatment.
5. Avoid excessive sun exposure for 4-6 weeks after treatment.
6. **DO NOT** apply creams or lotions to your legs for 24 hours after treatment.
7. If swelling occurs over an injection site, elevate and apply ice to the affected leg.
8. Small dark clots may develop in the treated veins. Contact our office if one of these clotted areas becomes painful and red.
9. In rare instances, a small, superficial ulceration of the skin may occur over an injected vein. This usually does not leave a scar, but should be examined promptly.

For true emergencies, please call our office immediately to speak with a physician.