

# Sclerotherapy

## Sclerotherapy

Sclerotherapy is a treatment for varicose veins and spider veins.

- ❑ **Varicose veins** are enlarged veins that can be dark purple or blue. They look twisted and are raised above the surface of the skin (bulging). Some of the veins can also be bluish-green and look marbled. Varicose veins are commonly found on the inside of the leg or on the back of the calves.
- ❑ **Spider veins** are found the closest to the skin's surface. They are very small and can be red or blue. They usually look like a spider web or tree branches. Spider veins are commonly found on the legs and face.

The results from sclerotherapy will be different for each person. Most patients have good results, but it is possible this treatment may not work for you. You may need several treatments.

## Insurance Coverage

It is important to understand your health care benefits before your treatment. Most insurance providers do not cover the costs of sclerotherapy. This treatment is often considered cosmetic, especially when removing spider veins.

Please call your insurance provider to find out exactly what is and isn't covered under your plan, and how much you have to pay yourself.

## Possible Risks and Side Effects

As with any treatment, sclerotherapy has some possible risks and side effects. The most common side effects at the injection sites are:

- bruising
- mild tenderness
- red raised patches of skin
- inflammation (swelling)
- skin discoloration (hyperpigmentation).

Rare side effects can include:

- blisters
- allergic reaction to the solution used during the treatment (This is more common in people who have a history of allergies.)
- permanent swelling (inflammation) of the leg
- deep vein thrombosis — a blood clot forms in one of the deep veins surrounded by muscle in the center of the arm or leg.
- pulmonary embolism — a blood clot loosens and travels through the bloodstream into the lungs and enters a pulmonary artery. Large clots completely block a pulmonary artery and can cause death.

Talk with your health care provider if you have questions or concerns about these possible risks and side effects.

## Before the Treatment

- This treatment takes about 60 minutes.
- Bring a pair of comfortable shorts to wear during your treatment.
- Bring a pair of prescription-strength compression stockings to wear after your treatment. Your health care provider will give you a prescription to purchase a pair of these compression stockings.
- You will need to sign a consent form.

## During the Treatment

- You will lie on an exam table.
- You may be asked to change positions during your treatment.
- Your health care provider will inject a solution into your veins with a small needle.
- When the needle is inserted, you may feel mild pain (similar to a slight pinch or insect bite).
- When the solution is injected, you may feel a mild burning sensation. This is normal.
- The solution will cause the vein wall to swell, stick together and then close. The vein will fade away over several weeks.

## After the Treatment

- You may return to your normal activities.
- The number of treatments it will take to remove the varicose and/or spider veins will be different for each person.
- It usually takes several treatments to treat the varicose and/or spider veins.
- It is possible to develop new varicose veins or spider veins, so more treatments may be needed each year.