

SCLEROTHERAPY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT ARE SPIDER VEINS?

Spider veins are tiny blood vessels that usually appear as clusters of red, purple, or blue veins just under the skin's surface. They are threadlike and "spidery" in appearance, sometimes having a starburst or tree-like pattern. They occur most commonly on the leg around the thighs, calves, or ankles.

HOW ARE SPIDER VEINS TREATED?

Sclerotherapy is the "gold standard" in treating unwanted spider veins. This procedure continues to be the most successful treatment option for spider veins.

WHAT IS SCLEROTHERAPY?

Sclerotherapy is a simple procedure performed in an outpatient clinic that requires no anesthesia. A sclerosant (irritating liquid) is injected into a vein using a small needle. The blood in the vein is displaced, causing damage to the vein which encourages the vein to become inflamed and ultimately smaller and less visible.

WILL I SEE IMMEDIATE RESULTS?

Fading is gradual and usually happens over several months after several treatments.

WILL TREATED VEINS GO BACK TO THEIR OLD APPEARANCE?

Even after successful treatment, spider veins may reappear. Some veins do not respond to sclerotherapy at all even after multiple treatments, and new spider veins can develop near the site of the previous injections.

HOW MANY TREATMENTS ARE REQUIRED?

The number of treatments needed varies for each patient, depending on the size and number of veins involved. Treatment plans are customized to each patient and are agreed upon by you and your vein specialist.

IS SCLEROTHERAPY PAINFUL?

The procedure causes minimal discomfort in most cases. A burning or stinging sensation at the time of injection may be felt. This discomfort usually stops within minutes. Most patients can return to their normal activities right after their treatment session.

ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS WITH SCLEROTHERAPY?

It is important that you discuss your concerns and expectations for the procedure with your provider. Even with highly trained vein specialists providing your care, side effects can occur, including:

- Swelling at the injection site is common in some patients but usually goes away within 60 minutes.
- Bruising can develop around injected areas but will disappear within a month.
- Bleeding at the injection site
- Hematomas (accumulations of blood underneath the skin that feel like lumps)
- Matting (the appearance of fine red veins)
- Hyperpigmentation (brown lines or spots)
- Ulcers
- Allergic reactions
- Blood clots
- Unmet expectations (sudden and/or dramatic results should not be expected)

UAB VEIN CLINIC

ARE THERE ANY SITUATIONS WHERE SCLEROTHERAPY SHOULD BE AVOIDED?

There are few cases where sclerotherapy should be avoided, but some medical conditions call for postponing treatment or proceeding with caution. These include pregnancy/nursing, prolonged bleeding disease, connective tissue disease, arterial disease, diabetes, a weak immune system, heart/kidney/liver disease, a history of keloid formations, allergies, anti-inflammatory medication/autoimmune medications and previous adverse reactions to sclerotherapy.

ARE MEDICAL STOCKINGS NEEDED AFTER TREATMENT?

Compression therapy is an important part of treatment for vein disease. To help optimize results and decrease possible complications, compression stockings are recommended. A prescription for the stockings will be provided before your session.

WILL INSURANCE PAY FOR SCLEROTHERAPY?

Sclerotherapy is not covered by most insurance companies, and the cost is not billed to insurance by UAB Medicine. Information on UAB Vein Clinic fees will be provided prior to treatment.

Let the professional staff at the UAB Vein Clinic schedule your comprehensive medical evaluation. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call **205.996.VEIN** (8346) or visit **uabmedicine.org/vein**.