

Center for Aesthetic and Laser Medicine Scottsdale

Sclerotherapy with Hypertonic Saline

Pre & Post Procedure Instructions

What are varicose and spider veins?

Varicose veins are veins that have become dilated and impede blood flow from the legs to the heart, which can lead to swelling of the veins. The blood can also back up and cause spider veins superficially in the skin. The cause is unknown, although they can be aggravated by pregnancy, birth control pills, hormonal therapy, prolonged periods of sitting or standing, obesity, aging, trauma, or tight clothing.

What is sclerotherapy?

Sclerotherapy is a popular method to eliminate spider veins. A sclerosing solution is injected into the veins to irritate the interior lining of the vein—we use hypertonic saline, a concentrated salt solution. The body slowly replaces the blood vessel with an invisible scar. *This process can take up to 6-8 weeks and may require multiple treatments.* The circulation is not harmed because blood is re-routed through healthy veins. Hypertonic saline is FDA-approved for electrolyte replenishment and correction when administered intravenously. The “off label” usage of hypertonic saline for sclerotherapy is well established and has been published in numerous peer-reviewed dermatologic and surgical journals

Does sclerotherapy work for everyone?

The majority of individuals who receive sclerotherapy treatment will have visible improvement in their varicosities. However, some patients may have less than satisfactory results, even after undergoing many treatments. In extremely rare cases, the patient’s condition may become worse after sclerotherapy treatment. It is not safe if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

How many treatments will I need?

The number of treatments needed to clear or improve varicose veins differs for each person, but can range from one to six, with the average number being three or four.

What are the most common side effects?

1. *Itching/irritation*- patients may experience mild itching; normally lasts 1-2 days. If you experience itching, antihistamines can be helpful.
2. *Temporary bruising/hematoma*- certain medications and supplements may increase the incidence of bruising; this risk may be minimized by avoiding blood thinners listed in the "Before the procedure" section (see reverse of this page).
3. *Transient discoloration*- it is common to notice hyperpigmentation after treatment. In rare instances, this may persist for 4 to 12 months.
4. *Temporary pain/tenderness*- few patients may experience moderate to severe pain and some bruising around the injection site. The veins may be tender to touch after the treatment and an uncomfortable sensation may be felt along the vein route. This pain is usually temporary.

What are the less common side effects?

1. *Neovascularization*- temporary development of new, tiny blood vessels.
2. *Allergic reactions*- an allergic reaction to the sclerosing agent is rare. This risk is greater in patients who have a history of allergic reactions.
3. *Swelling/firmness*- may occur in patients whose lower legs are treated or in those who stand for long periods of time. The swelling is not dangerous and is treated by elevating the legs and support stockings.

4. *Sloughing/blisters*- this rare side effect consists of a small, slowly healing ulceration at the injection site. If this develops, apply a healing ointment such as Vaseline or Aquaphor and a bandage for 1 week. The scar typically fades but may be a lighter or darker color than surrounding skin.
5. *Wound infection, poor healing, ischemia, necrosis, and scarring*- very rare.
6. *Phlebitis*- a very rare complication (approximately 0.1%) when treating veins >3-4mm in diameter. The dangers of phlebitis include the possibility of pulmonary embolus and post-phlebotic syndrome, in which the blood is not carried out of the legs, resulting in permanent swelling of the legs.
7. *Ulceration*- In rare cases the use of hypertonic saline for sclerotherapy may lead to ulceration in the overlying skin.

Before the procedure/what to bring:

1. One week prior to your appointment, **AVOID** blood thinners, such as aspirin, naproxen (Naprosyn, Aleve), fish oil/ingestion of fish (shellfish are ok), coconut oil, garlic pills, ginkgo, ginseng, curcumin/turmeric, and St. John's Wort.
Avoid ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) 3 days prior to your treatment.
Note: do not discontinue medications that you are taking for medical reasons without consulting your prescribing provider.
2. Purchase and **BRING** a pair compression stockings (15-20 mmHg) that are high enough (knee high, thigh high, or waist high) to cover the treatment areas. You will be wearing them immediately after the procedure. They can be purchased from pharmacies, medical equipment stores, and on the Internet. These stockings are washable and last for years.
3. Do not shave your legs for 24 hours prior to your appointment.
4. Eat a breakfast, lunch, or snack prior to your appointment.
5. **BRING** or wear shorts to the procedure. You may bring pants to wear when leaving your appointment if desired.

What should I do after the procedure?

1. Wear compression stockings (15-20 mmHg) all day for 3 weeks after your treatment for the optimal cosmetic result. You may remove at bedtime (no need to sleep in them).
2. Movement is good--walk for 30 minutes after the procedure when you get home. If you have a long drive home, keep the legs moving and make frequent stops to walk every 20 minutes. Normal daily activities can be resumed immediately, walk for 20 minutes or more daily.
3. Elevate your legs above the level of your heart whenever possible for 3 weeks.
4. Protect your skin from sun exposure for 1 week after treatment. When exposed, use sunscreen with an SPF 30 or higher. This will decrease the risk of pigmentation.

What should I NOT do after the procedure?

1. Avoid ibuprofen, aspirin, or other OTC anti-inflammatory medication for the first 48 hours after treatment.
2. Avoid strenuous, high impact exercise for 48 hours after treatment.
3. Avoid swimming for 7 days, and avoid bath/hot tubs for 2-3 weeks after treatment. Showers are acceptable.
4. Avoid standing without moving about. If you must stay in one place, move your feet and toes frequently.
5. Avoid flying on an airplane for one week after treatment.

Please contact our staff with any questions or concerns.

480-591-3500 or 602-494-1817

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