

I Can't Stand These Ugly **Red Veins** in my Legs!

If you have thought these words, you are not alone. It is estimated that about 1 in 10 Americans have unwanted vein conditions in their legs. Nearly 40 million people in the United States alone, including as many as 70% of women over the age of 60, have some degree of varicose or spider veins. Sclerotherapy has been used to destroy unwanted spider veins for the past 75 years. People who have their spider veins treated with sclerotherapy are usually women between the age of thirty and sixty, though women as young as eighteen and men get sclerotherapy performed. This treatment is not right for all vein disorders so to better understand the treatment of sclerotherapy, we must take a better look at these veins and what causes them to occur.

What Are Spider Veins?

Spider veins appear near the surface of the skin, are blue or red in color, and look similar to a spider web or tree roots. For the most part, spider veins form on thighs and calves, but can also appear on the face. Not only are spider veins displeasing to the eye, they can also cause physical pain, aching, burning, swelling, and night cramps. Unlike varicose veins, which are dark purple or blue and appear swollen and raised, spider veins are usually not associated with serious vein disorders, and are not an essential part of the venous system. There are number of different factors that can contribute to the development of spider veins. In women, hormonal shifts like puberty, pregnancy and menopause heighten the possibility of spider veins. Other factors include weight gain, prolonged sitting or standing, aging, or a leg injury, and, of course, there is always heredity.

Sometimes, spider veins are severe or occur in association with varicose veins. These are part of a more serious venous problem. To determine this, a venous duplex ultrasound should be performed to diagnose venous reflux. If these spider veins from an underlying reflux disorder are treated with sclerotherapy, they are likely to return.

Spider Vein Treatment (Sclerotherapy)

If you think you have spider veins and are seeking treatment, your first step should be to visit your doctor who specializes in vein care, to make sure they are not a result of severe venous insufficiency. Prior to the sclerotherapy injection process, the clinician will map out the vein condition and may use a handheld ultra-sound machine to detect any backflow or reflux within the venous system. The sclerotherapy injection process itself takes about 15 to 30 minutes to complete. The patient will rest on the medical examination table and prepped for the sclerotherapy injection process. Once the site has been cleaned, the sclerotherapy injection process involves injecting the sclerosing agent into the affected vein areas. During the sclerotherapy injection process the patient is awake and normally feels nothing worse than a slight burning and/or pinching sensation at the injection sites. After the sclerotherapy injection process is complete the patient's legs will be wrapped in compression tape and support hose may be worn for the first few days. Cramping in the legs is common in the first few days after the sclerotherapy injection process. Veins will appear worse before they get better. Patients are encouraged to walk around during the recovery period. After one month a patient may go in for the second sclerotherapy injection process. After a few sessions the results will be permanent and the appearance of spider veins greatly diminished.

Sclerotherapy Fees

According to the 2005 National Average for Physician/Surgeon Fees, the national average for a sclerotherapy session is \$326. Fees vary based on geographic location, market conditions and physician experience. Depending on the severity of your spider veins, multiple treatments may be needed. Sclerotherapy is billed per session, generally 20 to 30 minutes. Most sclerotherapy is considered a cosmetic treatment and will not be billed to your insurance carrier by the physician's office.

Progressive Vein Care

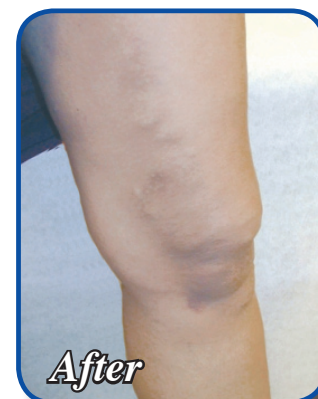
Dr. Praveen K. Malhotra is President and founder of Vein Care Center which includes locations in Findlay, Lima, Celina and Bellefontaine. Dr. Malhotra is a fellowship trained Vascular Interventional Radiologist. He is also a member of The American College of Phlebology and has specialized in a non-surgical treatment of varicose veins and spider vein treatment since 2003. New to the practice is Dr. Manu B. Aggarwal who works with patients' primary care physicians and referring physicians to treat venous disease and its complications.

April 2010 Special Offer -- free vein screening and/or sclerotherapy consultation with this article. Call the Vein Care Center to schedule your appointment: (419) 422-5905. For your convenience, Vein Care Center accepts MasterCard and Visa. For additional information on Vein Care Center, log onto the web at www.yourveincarecenter.com.

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