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## **SCLEROTHERAPY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **What is sclerotherapy?**

Sclerotherapy is a procedure to treat spider veins which involves injection of a sterile solution into the small veins using a very fine needle. This solution irritates the vein lining causing it to slowly disappear. Multiple veins can be injected at each session.

### **What are spider veins?**

Spider veins are small, superficial veins that appear on the surface of the skin, usually on the legs. They can be blue or purple and appear in a lattice pattern. Spider veins are completely harmless. They occur frequently in women in the aged 30-50.

### **What chemicals are used for sclerotherapy?**

Sclerotherapy is performed by injecting a small amount of hypertonic saline in the vein with a very fine needle. The chemical irritates the small vein and causes it to undergo fibrosis and eventually disappear.

### **Where is the procedure done?**

The procedure is performed at the Alex Eshaghian Medical, Professional Medical spa.

### **When are results noticeable?**

Over two to four weeks, the vessel turns into scar tissue that fades, eventually becoming virtually unnoticeable or invisible. Some blood vessel may have to be injected more than once, some weeks apart, depending on its size and response to treatment. In any one treatment session a number of vessels can be injected.

### **Can sclerotherapy be used to treat large varicose veins?**

Unfortunately, sclerotherapy is generally used for the very small superficial veins next to the skin. Sclerotherapy is not effective for large veins and requires large amounts of the sclerosants with the potential to be absorbed. When large veins are treated with sclerotherapy, a stronger solution and a higher volume is required. Following the treatment for larger veins, compression hose stockings are usually recommended to be worn for at least 2 weeks. It is best to get spider veins treated in the winter months as one can easily wear stockings.

### **How many sclerotherapy treatments are required?**

It varies from individual to individual but typically 2-4 treatments are required for the best results. In patients with milder cases, 1-2 will suffice. The treatments are more when there are more veins or slightly larger veins.

### **Do I have to limit any activity after the treatment?**

Walking is highly recommended soon after the procedure. But any high activity sports should be avoided for the first two to three days.

### **Does sclerotherapy hurt?**

There is minimal pain. For those who can not tolerate the pain, a topical numbing cream can be applied to the skin about 30 minutes before the procedure. There is a little sting associated with each injection. The burning sensation lasts few seconds. Most individuals tolerate the procedure and do not require any type of anesthesia. The majority of patients claim that the procedure is much less than painful than what they anticipated.

**What happens if spider veins are not treated?**

Absolutely nothing. Spider veins are small veins which are entirely of a cosmetic nuisance. They do not form blood clots, they do not ache, and they do not cause swollen feet or pain. One may elect to observe them.

**Can sclerotherapy be done on the arms or face?**

No, absolutely not. Sclerotherapy should never be done on the face and hands. The hand veins may not look pretty at times, but they should never be treated. Even though veins on the face are being done with sclerotherapy, the injections can be painful and the results are variable. If the facial veins are very conspicuous, laser is a better option than sclerotherapy.

**Is there any harm in removing spider veins?**

Spider veins have no function and removing does no harm. The only reason they are removed is because of their unsightly cosmetic appearance.

**Can anyone undergo sclerotherapy?**

Almost anyone with unwanted spider veins can be treated, except women who are pregnant or nursing. Other relative contraindications include those with skin infections, uncontrolled diabetes, fever, history of deep vein thrombosis, anticoagulant therapy those patients taking corticosteroids.

**Is there any preparation required before sclerotherapy?**

No preparation is required before the procedure. It is recommended that one stop smoking and stop taking aspirin a few day before the procedure. Any patient on a blood thinner is not a candidate for sclerotherapy.

**What happens after sclerotherapy treatment?**

There is some mild pain which can easily be overcome with Tylenol. The injected site will appear bruised and swollen for a few days. Continual wearing of the ace bandaged will relieve the swelling and pain. The bruising usually disappears in 2-3 weeks. One will have no problem with walking. After the first 2 days, most patients can resume their normal activities.

**How long is each sclerotherapy session?**

Generally, most individuals have multiple spider veins and only up to 15-20 injections can be done at one time. Each treatment session lasts up to 30 minutes.

**When can the treatment be done?**

Sclerotherapy is an elective procedure and can be done at any time. The procedure does not take more than 30 minutes depending on the number of veins treated.

**What are side effects of sclerotherapy?**

Besides some stinging pain, sclerotherapy can rarely cause a few side effects. Allergic reactions are rare. A few individuals may develop irritation or intense itching at the site of injection. If the chemical is injected outside the vein, profound discoloration and pain can occur.

**What causes spider veins to form?**

The cause of spider veins is not well known. It may be genetic or related to hormone therapy, pregnancy, or birth control medications.

**Can spider veins be prevented?**

There are certain things that can be done to minimize spider vein formation. Regular walking with low-heeled shoes and exercise as well as wearing support hose may prevent formation of some spider veins.