



Adult, Pediatric & Cosmetic Dermatology
Laser & Skin Surgery

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Injection Sclerotherapy/ Treatment of Spider Veins

.Spider Veins, known medically as Telangiectasia, are dilated skin capillaries and are frequently an inherited tendency. Veins may be red (arterial capillaries) or blue (venous capillaries) in color and most people have both types. The microinjection technique consists of instilling a solution into these tiny capillaries using a needle so small that a magnifying lens is required. This irritates the inner lining of the capillaries so they cease to carry blood and the body slowly replaces them with scar tissue without harming the circulation. Several injections may be needed for a specific area of telangiectasia. The rare pure venous type is more difficult to abolish. Some brown freckling may appear after injection which gradually fades, but a small amount may be permanent. The goal is to produce about 75-80% improvement. Pain during injection is described by patients as very slight. Fading of the spiders is a slow process and maximum improvement may require many months.

Charges relate to the amount of time spent by the doctor and the amount of medication required. Actual injection is done only by the doctor rather than a nurse or assistant. A full treatment costs \$425.00. A preliminary consultation must be scheduled to better determine your approximate expense and anticipated results. Consultations start at \$85.00 depending on questions presented and coordination of care involved. All fees for these cosmetic services must be paid at the time of the visit.

Results of treatment cannot be guaranteed, but most patients are very pleased with the cosmetic improvement.

1. What is used? Usually Sotradecol, .1-1%, will be used. The concentration and quality of solution used depends on the size and length of the vessel treated. Sotradecol is an FDA approved agent. On occasion, a concentrated saline solution (Sodium Chloride), 18-25% or Aethoxysklerol, .25-1% is used.

2. Is there any way to prevent them? Some authorities feel the use of support hose is helpful. Exercising and reducing your weight also seems to help.

3. Are there any special instructions after the procedure? Pressure dressing should be worn until bedtime. Strenuous physical activity or prolonged periods of standing should be avoided on the first 24 hours. Support hose should be worn 2-3 weeks.

4. How often can I be treated? It is preferable to inject the same area about about 4-6 weeks of healing. Different sites can be injected every week.

5. How many time does it need to be done? This varies with the number of areas that have to be injected, as well as the response to each injection. It usually takes 2-3 injections to obliterate any vessel.

6. How should I dress for the procedure? It's advisable to wear swimsuit bottoms, a leotard under a loose skirt, pants or shorts.

7. Are there certain kinds of spider veins that can not be treated? Generally speaking, the larger the vessel the more difficult it is to eradicate. The blue vessels, which are very small varicose veins, can also be treated. These require frequent injections with tiny amounts of solution plus compression dressing for maximal effect. Some of the extremely small vessels must be treated with electrodesiccation (electrocautery).

8. Is this method superior to laser? This procedure leads to less scarring than with lasers. The laser is a more expensive treatment and is usually reserved for vessels which do not respond to any of the injections.

9. How does it work? The solution works by irritating the tiny cells lining the blood vessels, which closes the vessels slowly over time.

10. What are the side effects?

a) 95% of the patients have **none** and the vessels slowly disappear.

b) **Slight blistering** when small amounts of solution seep into the skin. This blistering heals quickly, but occasionally a small amount of pigmentation can persist indefinitely at the injection site. This pigmentation is easily treated with appropriate bleaching agents.

c) **Bruising** occasionally, when the vessels are very weak, bruising can result which can last anywhere from 2 weeks to 2 years. Slight stinging or pain can also be observed when the solution is being injected.

d) A **clot** could develop at the injection site, but will never cause internal problems, but its removal within 2 weeks of the injection will speed up the healing process.

e) **Swelling** occasionally severe, it noted. It is particularly common when patients have jobs in which they stand for long periods of time, or in which vessels in the ankle or lower portions of the legs are involved. The swelling is never dangerous, but occasionally must be treated with elevation and compression dressing.

f) **Superficial thrombophlebitis**; an irritation of the vessels closest to the skin. It sometimes must be treated with anti-inflammatory agents and bed rest. This probably occurs in less than 1 case per 1000.

11. How soon will the vessels disappear? Each vessel will require 2-3 injections. Usually the vessels disappear over a period of 2 weeks to 2 months. Recurrences can occur over a period of 1-5 years. This treatment does not prevent new telangiectasia from occurring.

12. Will my insurance reimburse me for this procedure? This procedure is generally not covered by medical insurance, **it is considered a cosmetic procedure.**

Treatment Tips

1. **DO NOT** use moisturizers on your legs for 24 hours before the procedure.
2. **DO NOT** shave your legs for 48 hours before treatment.
3. Bring shorts or a leotard to wear during the procedure.
4. Don't wear tight clothing on the day of treatments.
5. Circle your worst veins with a ball point pen.
6. Avoid heat, prolonged sitting or standing or strenuous exercising such as aerobics or the first 48 hours after treatment. During this period try to elevate your legs while sitting.
7. Speed up recovery after 48 hours by walking for exercising regularly while wearing fitted support hosiery. The best results are often obtained when this hosiery is worn almost continuously for the first 48 hours and as much as possible for the 3 weeks following the treatment.