

## Sclerotherapy

Sclerotherapy is a popular method of eliminating spider veins in which a solution, called a sclerosing agent (Polidocanol), is injected into your tiny veins. The solution damages the lining thus resulting in inflammation and closure of the veins. Over the next several weeks, your spider veins will clot and be absorbed by your body causing them to fade.

### How is Sclerotherapy Performed?

Your legs are cleansed with an alcohol solution. Using very fine, small needles the solution is injected directly into your problematic vessels. The number of veins injected in one session varies depending on the size and location of the veins. The maximum amount of solution that can be injected in one session is 25cc. After the injections are completed, compression stockings are applied. The sclerotherapy procedure takes about 60 minutes. Bruising is common after injections are performed and most patient's legs will look "worse before better."

### Risks

The potential side effects of sclerotherapy include, but are not limited to:

- Transient hyperpigmentation: Approximately 20% of patients who undergo Sclerotherapy notice a discoloration (light-brown streaks) after treatment. This usually fades in 4 to 12 months. In rare instances this darkening of the skin may persist for years.
- Temporary tiny blood vessels may develop at the treated area. This is called revascularization, "flares," "mats," or "blushing." They may appear days or weeks after the procedure, but should fade within a few months and usually do not require further treatment.
- Allergic reaction
- Most common side effects:
  - The veins may become firm and tender to the touch after treatment, and an uncomfortable sensation may run along the vein route. This discomfort is usually temporary.
  - Bruising is very common and to be expected.
  - Some patients complain of an itchy sensation after treatment, which is also very normal.
  - Trapped blood may cause a discoloration, which can be flushed out, although this can leave discoloration (bronzing) up to one year.

Other side effects rarely develop after sclerotherapy. If you have any of these rare side effects, please contact our office immediately:

- Sudden onset of a swollen leg. This could be the sign of a deep vein thrombosis (DVT) which is a very rare complication. The dangers of DVT include the possibility of pulmonary embolism (a

blood clot carried to the lungs) and postphlebitic syndrome, resulting in a permanent swelling of the leg.

- Skin ulceration associated with sclerotherapy is a very rare complication. A blister may form, open, and become ulcerated. Healing occurs slowly over a few months. After healing, this will usually leave a scar.

### Before the Treatment

- Well-fitting compression stockings are an important part of the post injection care and should be brought to your appointment. Compression stockings can be purchased at Teton Vascular Institute, local medical supply stores, or online. Best brands of compression stockings to purchase are: Medi, Sigvaris, Juzo, or Jobst. Places to purchase compression stockings:
  - Teton Vascular Institute, 444 Hospital Way, Bldg 100, Suite 111, Pocatello
  - Shaver Pharmacy & Compounding, 235 S 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Pocatello
  - Online: [discountsurgical.com](http://discountsurgical.com)
- Women should always inform their nurse if there is any possibility that they are pregnant.
- The nurse will review the risks and benefits of the treatment and answer any questions you may have.

### Aftercare instructions

- After the treatment you will be able to drive home. You may resume regular activities and are encouraged to walk.
- We recommend that you **wear compression stockings for 24 hours, day and night**. After the initial 24-hour period, **wear compression stockings for 3 days taking them off at night**. You may find it beneficial to continue to wear the compression stockings during the daytime after the initial 3 days as healing can take up to 6 weeks. Compression stockings can never be worn too much.
- You may experience slight discomfort such as aching or throbbing for the first 1-2 weeks after the treatment. Walking will help dissipate this sensation. If discomfort continues, Ibuprofen may be taken with food.
- Significant bruising may occur. This is a normal process and you should not be alarmed. The vessels may appear to turn dark in color and/or be slightly tender and firm to the touch. This could be an entrapment of blood in the closed vessels which is a normal response to the procedure, and will be evacuated at the time of your next treatment session. If this area of entrapped blood becomes very tender before your next appointment, please call Teton Vascular Institute.

- Exercise is an important part of the healing process. A 20-minute walk or bike ride once or twice a day is best for the healing process. If you are already involved in an exercise program, you are encouraged to continue. The only exercises to avoid are leg exercises with weights and high impact aerobics. These activities should be avoided for 7 days.
- Sun exposure is NOT recommended for 10 days after your treatment. Sunburn on areas that have recently been treated could result in skin damage.
- Hot tubs, saunas and long hot baths are not recommended for 1 week following treatment, as the warmth causes the veins to dilate.

Call Teton Vascular Institute at 208-232-8346 with any questions about the treatment or how your legs are feeling.