

MICROSCLEROTHERAPY

WHAT IS THREAD VEIN REMOVAL (MICROSCLEROTHERAPY)

What are Thread veins?

They are tiny blood vessels that seem to suddenly appear, out of the blue, on the nose, cheeks and legs, and are labelled as thread veins, spider veins or broken capillaries. Whether you call them thread veins, spider veins or whatever, they are basically the same condition - enlarged tiny blood vessels, easily visible through the skin. They are part of the body's vascular system, made up of arteries, veins and capillaries. Arteries carry blood from the heart, veins carry blood back to the heart and capillaries are tiny blood vessels which link the smaller arteries to small veins. Thread veins are often labelled as spider veins because, when observed closely, they appear to radiate outwards, resembling thin spiders' legs from a central point. This typical radial pattern is also similar to a spiders web! The smaller thread veins are usually red, whereas the larger ones are blue or purple indicating a slower blood flow. Thread veins or 'spider veins' are extremely common. Although the causes are unknown, they are associated by changes in temperature, smoking, hormonal changes, alcohol, prolonged standing and could perhaps be an inherited condition.

What is Microsclerotherapy?

Microsclerotherapy is a virtually painless, popular treatment solution to remove the visible spider veins for cosmetic purposes. It is a simple procedure where we inject a dilute irritant solution into the unwanted thread veins using a very fine needle. The solution damages the vessel lining causing it to break down, the damaged vein tissue is slowly absorbed over 3 months improving the appearance of the unwanted spider veins.

How many treatments will I need?

The number of treatments needed to clear or improve the condition differs from patient to patient, depending on the size of the spider veins. The majority of persons who have sclerotherapy performed note improvement in the appearance of the spider veins after 2 treatments. Most patients require 6 treatments for complete clearing of the veins. Approximately 10% of patients who undergo sclerotherapy will have veins that do not totally disappear after six treatments. In very rare instances the patient's condition may become worse after sclerotherapy treatment. The best results will be obtained when the patient is conscientious about wearing the suggested support hosiery for three days following the injections. This treatment does not prevent new veins from emerging and it is likely that maintenance/touch up treatments will be required if a new vein emerges. Because only a limited amount of sclerosing solution can be injected per visit, patients with many spider veins may only be able to have 30% - 50% of them treated each visit. Your practitioner will discuss this with you during your consultation appointment. Injections can be performed every 4-6 weeks.

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What are the most common side effects?

The most common side effects experienced with sclerotherapy treatments include the following:

- **Cramping:** Depending on the type of solution used, you may experience mild cramping along the vein route. This normally lasts 20 minutes but may persist longer in a minority of patients.
- **Slight itching** may be noted along the vein route for one hour after treatment and may persist for one or two days in a minority of patients.
- **Transient Hyperpigmentation:** Approximately 10% of patients who undergo sclerotherapy notice discoloration (light brown streaks) after treatment. In almost every patient the veins become darker immediately after the procedure. This darkening usually resolves in 10 to 14 days. In rare instances this darkening of the vein persists for 4 to 12 months. The use of sunscreen on the legs after treatment may help decrease the incidence of these streaks.
- **Erosions/blisters:** Erosions occur in less than 1% of the patients who receive sclerotherapy. This small ulceration at the injection site heals slowly over 1 to 2 months. A blister may form, open, and become ulcerated. The scar that follows should return to a normal color. This occurrence usually represents injection into or near a small artery and is not preventable. However, this is an uncommon side effect.
- **Allergic reactions:** Very rarely a patient may have an allergic reaction to the sclerosing agent used. The risk of an allergic reaction is greater in patients who have a history of allergies.
- **Pain:** The needles used to inject are the same size as an acupuncture needle, therefore patients rarely experience discomfort, however, a few patients experience moderate to severe pain that they describe as cramping after the solution is injected in larger veins. This uncomfortable sensation usually resolves in less than 20 minutes. The veins may be tender to the touch after treatment. This pain is usually temporary, in most cases lasts 1 to 2 days.
- **Bruising:** Bruising may occur at the site of injection. Avoiding aspirin, Ibuprofen, fish oils Vitamin E, and garlic for 7 days prior to receiving the injections can decrease this risk of bruising.
- **Telangiectatic matting:** This refers to the development of new tiny blood vessels in the foot or ankle. It usually resolves in a few days and is lessened by wearing the prescribed support stockings.
- **Ankle swelling:** Ankle swelling may occur after treatment of blood vessels in the foot or ankle. It usually resolves in a few days and is lessened by wearing the prescribed support stockings.
- **Phlebitis:** Phlebitis is a very rare complication, seen in approximately 1 out of every 1000 patients treated for varicose veins greater than 3 to 4 mm in diameter. However, varicose veins of this size are not treated by sclerotherapy

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What precautions must I take after receiving the injections?

The best results will be obtained if the patient wears support stocking with at least 18mm Hg pressure. Walking and exercise is encouraged after the procedure and there are no restrictions on activity after the procedure.

What are the possible complications if I do not have sclerotherapy performed?

The spider veins will continue to get bigger, and therefore, more painful to treat. However, there are no health risks associated with small spider veins. This is a cosmetic problem.

Are there other types of procedures to treat varicose veins and telangiectasias? What are their side effects?

Lasers can be used to treat spider veins but the current research shows that the laser treatments are more expensive and less effective than sclerotherapy. Ambulatory phlebectomy is a procedure in which certain types of veins can be removed through small surgical incisions. The complications of this procedure are similar to those of sclerotherapy with the addition of small surgical scars that naturally occur with this procedure. Vein stripping and or ligation, performed by a vascular surgeon, may also be used to treat the very large varicose veins. This procedure may require a hospital stay and usually is performed while the patient is under general anesthesia. Risks of vein stripping and or ligation include permanent nerve paralysis in a small percentage of patients, possible pulmonary emboli, infection, and permanent scarring.

Before treatment

- Avoiding aspirin, Ibuprofen, fish oils Vitamin E, and garlic for 7 days prior to receiving the injections can decrease this risk of bruising.
- Do not use bath oils, lotions or creams on your leg for 24 hours before your injections.
- Dress in loose clothing, jogging trousers or skirt and comfortable shoes to accommodate the support hosiery.
- Please purchase your compression garments ahead of your appointment and bring them with you - you must wear these immediately post treatment. We recommend www.macom-medical.com use code RESOLVE for 15% off site wide.
- You will be asked to go for a 10 minute walk post treatment - please wear appropriate footwear

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Sclerotherapy Post Treatment Instructions:

- Book your 2 week review appointment immediately
- Take a brisk 10 minute walk immediately after treatment.
- Drink plenty of water
- Wear your support hosiery day and night for 72 hours. Do not be alarmed that the thread veins look worse, this is normal at this stage.
- If you suffer from itching a cool shallow bath will help.
- Thereafter wear your support stockings during the day for 7 days, you may take them off at night.
- Avoid extremes of temperature for 14 days, ie very hot baths, saunas and sun beds.
- Avoid sun exposure for 4 weeks, pigmentation may take longer to fade.
- Avoid high impact exercise for 2 weeks.
- Avoid leg waxing for 4 weeks.
- Elevate your legs as much as possible for the first 2 weeks.
- Consider wearing support hosiery long term to minimise thread vein recurrence.
- Any problems please contact your practitioner.

At Resolve we have clinics in Sutton Coldfield, Oldbury and Stafford across the West Midlands. Each thread vein removal session takes 30 minutes, you may require multiple sessions to treat large areas of spider veins as there is a limit to the volume of solution that can safely be injected at each appointment.

We charge £500 for your first two 30 minute treatment sessions (each 4 weeks apart)

Subsequent treatment sessions cost £275 per 30 minute session.

If you have a large area to be treated and require a longer session this is billed per 30 minutes of treatment.