

Sclerotherapy

What is sclerotherapy?

It is the treatment of small and large blood vessels with an injected solution to lessen their visibility. By using a solution to irritate the lining of the vessel in combination with external pressure the body is able to absorb these treated vessels over time.

Which veins and blood vessels are appropriate for treatment?

Vessels need to be large enough for your physician to get a small needle inside. Vessels measuring 1-2 mm are most easily treated. Unlike laser, all colors of vessels can be treated at once. Larger vessels can be treated, but may cause more discomfort during the post operative period. If you have specific medical problems or severely damaged veins you may not be an appropriate candidate for sclerotherapy.

What are possible adverse effects or complications?

At the injection site there might be tiny scab, crust or bruise which may last for two to three weeks. The most common adverse effect is a brownish discoloration at the injection site or along the course of the vessel. This may last for several months, but in most cases fades over time. Rare cases do occur where the discoloration may last longer than a year. In extremely rare cases a small sore or ulceration may occur at the injection site. This may heal with a small white depressed scar.

What to do prior to the procedure?

It is recommended that the day of your surgery to wear loose comfortable fitting clothing. One week prior to the procedure, please avoid aspirin or Advil, ibuprofen, and any homeopathic blood thinners. Additionally, we recommend no alcohol three days prior to your procedure. If you are taking any new medicine or alternative medicines, please advise your physician since some can act as blood thinners which may decrease the success of your procedure.

What to expect the day of the procedure:

You will be placed in a comfortable position on the examination table which allows best access and visibility to the treated area by your physician. Photos of the area may be taken to document your improvements. Your doctor will cleanse the area with alcohol. A concentrated salt solution (hypertonic saline) will be injected into the appropriate sites through a very fine needle. There is a minute amount of discomfort as the needle penetrates the skin. Occasionally there is a flushing or "hot" feeling when solution is being injected. Some people may experience a mild cramping sensation which passes after a few minutes. You may notice during the treatment that as the solution is injected that a whole network of veins may disappear and reappear moments later, this is normal. The vessels may appear swollen or irritated after the treatment and this will resolve in two to five days. The injections sites will all be covered with gauze and tape. Finally an ace wrap or compression stocking (you may have custom made hose made to your specifications prior to treatment) will be placed over the treated regions.

What to expect when you go home:

The area may ache slightly after the treatment. Tylenol should be taken for discomfort. We recommend the night following the procedure to keep your legs elevated and not to do extensive walking or exercise. Walking is encouraged the next day, but heavy exercise should be avoided for one week. The gauze and tape may be removed the next day, but the Ace wrap or compression hose should be worn consecutively for seven days with the exception of bathing. You may develop noticeable swelling in your legs especially in the ankle area during the week following your treatment. Foods high in salt content should be avoided three days after the treatment. Sun avoidance is mandatory in areas where there is bruising or discoloration to facilitate healing and resolution of discoloration.

When to come back for a follow up:

It is recommended after your first treatment to do a routine follow up of the treated area between two to four weeks after the procedure. If another area is in need of treatment, it may be done at this time. Continued improvement may be noticed up until about six weeks after the treatment, so it is advisable to wait this amount of time prior to repeating treatment in an identical area of involvement.

How many treatments will I need?

It is impossible to predict how many treatments are required. It is recommend to start with a small area of involvement, wait six weeks and determine if this therapy has the expected results you desire. On the average, most individuals will have between 40-70% clearing per treatment session. Each patient responds uniquely and there is no way to determine which vessels will reopen with time and/or be replaced with new ones.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call:

212-675-0549

