

MICROSCLEROTHERAPY AND THREAD VEINS

Sclerotherapy is a safe and well-established treatment for thread veins on the legs. Although there are a number of alternative treatments, it remains the most reliable and successful of them all.

A very small needle is inserted into the vein and a solution is injected. Most people find this to be relatively painless. The thread veins will look more obvious in the days after injection but start to fade within 1-2 weeks. Final results are best judged after 12 weeks. On average, 60-80% of treated veins disappear after successful injection, and two treatment sessions are usually sufficient for most people. If you have more extensive numbers of thread veins more sessions may be required. We can advise on this at your consultation.

WHAT DOES A MICROSCLEROTHERAPY TREATMENT SESSION INVOLVE?

You need to have a consultation and full assessment of your veins before treatment can commence. Around one quarter of thread veins are caused by a problem in the larger veins. If that is the case we need to deal with the cause at the same time as treating the thread veins or they will just recur soon afterwards.

A typical session lasts around 30 minutes and you can leave the department immediately afterwards. You can drive home yourself, a lift is not essential.

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. You may also wish to bring a pair of shorts to wear during the treatment session.

After treatment compression stockings are sometimes used to help close the veins. We recommend wearing them day and night for the first 2 days, then as much as possible for the next 7 days after that. You can remove the stocking for a cool or lukewarm shower

Over a period of time the vein will heal closed and fade away. This could take 12 weeks, sometimes longer, but you should see an improvement within 6 weeks.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE TREATMENT?

As soon as the procedure has been completed you can leave the department and return to normal physical activity including work.

It is important to avoid sun exposure for 4 weeks after treatment. Any pigmentation that has occurred may take longer to fade. Use a sun block if going into the sun

Avoid high impact exercise, waxing and extremes of temperature (eg. hot baths, saunas or sun beds) for 2 weeks after treatment.

Air travel is usually fine 24 hours after treatment, but please discuss any immediate travel plans prior to treatment.

COMPLICATIONS/CONSENT

The two most common complications are staining and matting.

Staining of the skin occurs when the vein is not closed entirely, and some blood gets trapped and clots. In some people iron pigments then leak from the clot and stain the skin over the vessel a brown colour. These brown marks are normally not permanent but may take 6 - 18 months to fade. They darken when exposed to the sun and will take longer to fade if tanned.

Matting occurs if the fragile vessel is injured during the injection, leaving a mat of tiny veins that look like a blush or a red bruise. Matting usually disappears completely after 6 - 12 months, but if it persists, it can be treated with further sclerotherapy or IPL laser therapy.

Other risks are extremely rare but these include:

Allergic reaction - any drug carries a risk of allergic reaction. It is quite common for patients to experience some itching and some redness at the treatment site. This is no cause for concern and will pass within a few hours.

If the solution irritates the tissue at injection sites some blistering can occur. These usually fade completely but in rare instances may lead to a small scar.

Rarely a vein may become painful as it heals, this is called phlebitis.

Deep vein thrombosis has been reported following this treatment but is very rare.

Finally, the results achieved after one treatment vary considerably from one client to another. You should budget for up to 4 treatments 4 - 16 weeks apart.

An improvement of 80% would be considered a very good result by most experts

In rare cases the treatment has little or no effect. Results cannot be guaranteed.

If you have any problems after treatment, please contact the clinic.