

SPIDER VEIN TREATMENT



The Symbol of Excellence in Plastic Surgery®

A public education service of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons®
and the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery.

The first step:

Choose a surgeon you can trust

Plastic surgery, whether for cosmetic or reconstructive purposes, involves many choices. The first and most important is selecting a surgeon you can trust. A doctor's board certification is one of the best indicators of his or her training. Ask for certification from The American Board of Plastic Surgery® (ABPS), the only one of the 24 boards approved by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) that certifies physicians in plastic surgery of the face and all areas of the body. To be ABPS board-certified, a physician must meet these rigorous standards:

- ▶ Graduate from an accredited medical school
- ▶ Complete at least **five** years of surgical training following medical school with a minimum of **two** years of plastic surgery residency training
- ▶ Pass comprehensive oral and written exams

American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) and American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS) Members must:

- ▶ Be certified by the ABPS or in Canada by The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada®
- ▶ Complete continuing medical education including patient safety each year
- ▶ Perform surgery in accredited, state-licensed or Medicare-certified surgical facilities



Beauty for life:

Enhancing your appearance with spider vein treatment

If you sometimes avoid showing your legs because you have spider veins – those small clusters of red, blue or purple veins that appear on the thighs, calves and ankles – you are not alone. It's estimated that at least half of all women are bothered by this common cosmetic problem.

If you would like to eliminate your spider veins and improve your appearance, your plastic surgeon can help. Today there are very effective, safe and relatively painless methods available for eradicating spider veins.

In some women, spider veins become noticeable in their early 20s. For others, the veins may not become obvious until they reach their 40s. Men get spider veins, too. However, usually they are concealed by hair growth on the leg.

A number of factors may contribute to the development of spider veins in the legs, including:

- ▶ Heredity
- ▶ Pregnancy
- ▶ Hormonal shifts
- ▶ Weight gain
- ▶ Occupations or activities that require prolonged sitting or standing

Is it right for me?

Spider vein treatment is a highly individualized procedure and you should do it for yourself, not to fulfill someone else's desires or to try to fit any sort of ideal image. Spider vein treatment can be performed on people of any age and is a good option for you if:

- ▶ You are bothered by spider veins anywhere on your body
- ▶ You have a positive outlook and realistic goals for your spider vein treatment
- ▶ You are committed to following your plastic surgeon's prescribed course of treatment

What to expect during your consultation

The success and safety of your procedure depends very much on your complete candidness during your consultation. You'll be asked a number of questions about your health, desires and lifestyle.

Be prepared to discuss:

- ▶ Why you want the procedure, your expectations and desired outcome
- ▶ Any problems you may have had in the area to be treated, such as pain or previous injuries
- ▶ Any surgical procedures that have been performed near the area to be treated, including any previous vein treatments
- ▶ Medical conditions, family history, drug allergies, and medical treatments
- ▶ Use of current medications, vitamins, herbal supplements, alcohol, tobacco and drugs

Your surgeon may also:

- ▶ Evaluate your general health status and any pre-existing health conditions or risk factors
- ▶ Examine your veins in detail
- ▶ Discuss your options and recommend a course of treatment
- ▶ Discuss likely outcomes of spider vein treatment and any risks or potential complications

If leg veins are the problem, your surgeon may examine you for signs of more serious “deep vein” problems, as well as for larger, varicose veins. These conditions are often identified by swelling, sores, or skin changes at the ankle. A hand-held ultrasound device is sometimes used to detect any backflow within the venous system. If problems are identified, your surgeon may refer you to a different specialist for further evaluation and possible treatment.

Preparing for the procedure



Prior to your procedure, you may be asked to:

- ▶ Get lab testing or a medical evaluation
- ▶ Take certain medications or adjust your current medications
- ▶ Stop smoking
- ▶ Avoid taking aspirin and certain anti-inflammatory drugs and herbal supplements as they can increase bleeding

Special instructions you receive will cover:

- ▶ What to do on the day of treatment
- ▶ Care and follow-up

Procedural Steps:

What happens during spider vein treatment?

Sclerotherapy requires no anesthesia and is usually performed in an outpatient setting. Two or more sessions, each lasting less than an hour, are usually required to obtain optimal results.

Step 1 - The treatment

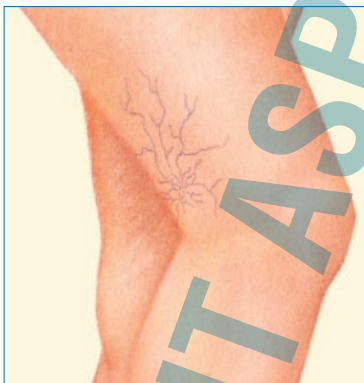
A common method of treating spider veins in the legs and ankles is with sclerotherapy. In this treatment, sclerosing solution is injected into each affected vein, causing the vein to collapse and fade from view. Although everyone is different, you can generally expect to receive one injection for every inch of spider vein that is treated. Bright light and magnification may be used to ensure maximum precision while the skin is held taut to inject sclerosing solution. A cotton ball and compression tape is often applied to each injection site as it is finished.



Procedural Steps:

What happens during spider vein treatment?

Leg veins may also be treated with a laser. In this method, an intense beam of light is directed at the spider vein, which obliterates it through the skin. Typically, two or more sessions are needed to obtain the desired results. Sometimes, laser therapy is used in combination with sclerotherapy.



The decision to have spider vein treatment is extremely personal and you'll have to decide if the benefits will achieve your goals and if the risks and potential complications are acceptable. Your plastic surgeon and/or staff will explain in detail the risks associated with treatment. You will be asked to sign consent forms to ensure that you fully understand the procedure you will undergo and any risks and potential complications.

Important facts about the safety and risks of spider vein treatment

The decision to have spider vein treatment is extremely personal and you'll have to decide if the benefits will achieve your goals and if the risks and potential complications are acceptable. Your plastic surgeon and/or staff will explain in detail the risks associated with surgery. You will be asked to sign consent forms to ensure that you fully understand the procedure you will undergo, the alternatives and the most likely risks and potential complications.

Some of the risks include:

- ▶ Unfavorable scarring
- ▶ Bleeding (hematoma)
- ▶ Infection
- ▶ Poor healing of injection sites
- ▶ Change in skin sensation
- ▶ Damage to deeper structures – such as nerves, blood vessels and muscles – can occur and may be temporary or permanent
- ▶ Allergies to tape, suture materials and glues, blood products, topical preparations or injected agents
- ▶ Skin contour irregularities
- ▶ Skin discoloration and swelling
- ▶ Skin sensitivity
- ▶ Ulceration
- ▶ Pain, which may persist
- ▶ Possibility of revisional surgery
- ▶ Need for further injection therapy

Be sure to ask questions: It's very important to ask your plastic surgeon questions about your procedure. It's natural to feel some anxiety, whether it's excitement for your anticipated new look or a bit of preoperative stress. Don't be shy about discussing these feelings with your plastic surgeon.

More facts about the safety and risks

Where will my procedure be performed?

Spider Vein treatment is usually performed in your plastic surgeon's office.

After your treatment, you may be instructed to wear support hose to help your legs heal. You may feel some cramping in your legs for the first day or two after treatment. This discomfort is temporary and usually doesn't require prescription medication.

You will be given specific instructions that may include: How to care for your legs following treatment, medications to apply or take orally to aid healing and reduce the risk of infection, and when to follow-up with your plastic surgeon.

When you go home

Should any complications occur, notify your plastic surgeon who will determine if any additional treatment is needed.

Be careful

Following your physician's instructions is key to the success of your treatment. It is important that the injection sites are not subjected to excessive force, abrasion, or motion during the time of healing. Your doctor will give you specific instructions on how to care for yourself.



My recovery

Every patient heals at a different rate. However, you can expect that your recovery will follow this general time line:

Within the first week

- ▶ You will be encouraged to walk
- ▶ The tape, cotton balls or any other dressings (if used) will be removed from the treated areas when recommended by the plastic surgeon
- ▶ The treated sites will appear bruised
- ▶ You may be instructed to wear support stockings for three to six weeks
- ▶ You will be discouraged from sitting or standing in one place for more than an hour or two
- ▶ You should avoid squatting, heavy lifting and running

Within one month

- ▶ The bruises at the treated sites will diminish
- ▶ You will begin to feel more comfortable wearing leg-baring fashions
- ▶ You can resume most exercise; however, your doctor should be consulted if you plan to do any weight lifting or jogging
- ▶ One month after the first treatment, spider veins are distinctly lighter, yet still somewhat visible
- ▶ You will be discouraged from sitting or standing in one place for more than an hour or two
- ▶ After two or more treatments, the leg appears noticeably clearer and more attractive

The practice of medicine and surgery is not an exact science. Although good results are expected, there is no guarantee, in some situations, it may not be possible to achieve optimal results with a single surgical procedure and another procedure may be necessary.

Results and outlook

After about a month of healing, you may be ready for a second vein treatment. With each treatment, you will notice further improvement of your skin's appearance.



It's important to know treatment may not prevent new spider veins from surfacing in the future. As time passes, you may find that you need further treatments to take care of any new veins that may emerge.

How much will spider vein treatment cost?

Cost is always a consideration in elective treatment. Prices for spider vein procedures can vary widely. A surgeon's cost for may vary based on his or her experience, the type of procedure used, as well as geographic location. Many plastic surgeons offer patient financing plans, so be sure to ask.

Cost may include:

- ▶ Surgeon's fee
- ▶ Surgical facility costs
- ▶ Prescriptions for medication
- ▶ Post-treatment garments, and
- ▶ Medical tests

Most health insurance plans will not cover spider vein treatment, related complications or another procedure to revise the appearance of your legs. You must carefully review your health insurance policy.

Your satisfaction involves more than a fee

When choosing a plastic surgeon for spider vein treatment, remember that the surgeon's experience and your comfort with him or her are just as important as the final cost of the procedure.



Words to know

Arborizing veins: Veins that resemble tiny, branch-like shapes in a cartwheel pattern, often seen on the outer thigh.

Hyfrecation: Spider vein treatment in which the vessels are cauterized.

Laser therapy: An intense beam of light passed over the leg to eliminate spider veins.

Laser treatment: An intense beam of light directed at the spider vein, which obliterates it through the skin.

Reticular veins: Larger, darker leg veins that tend to bulge slightly, but are not severe enough to require surgical treatment.

Sclerotherapy: Sclerosing solution injected into a vein, causing it to collapse and fade from view.

Simple linear veins: Veins which appear as thin, separate lines, and are commonly seen on the inner knee or on the face.

Spider-shaped veins: A group of veins radiating outward from a dark central point.

Spider veins: Small clusters of red, blue or purple veins that appear in the skin on the thighs, calves and ankles.

Support hose: Special stockings that compress your legs, typically used for varicose veins and post-surgical conditions.

Ultrasound: A device that uses high-frequency sound waves to create images of organs and systems within the body.

Varicose veins: Abnormally swollen or dilated veins.

Venous system: Veins.

Questions to ask my plastic surgeon

Use this checklist as a guide during your consultation

- ☐ Are you certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery?
- ☐ Are you a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons or the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery?
- ☐ Were you trained specifically in the field of plastic surgery?
- ☐ How many years of plastic surgery training have you had?
- ☐ How many procedures of this type have you performed?
- ☐ Am I a good candidate for this procedure?
- ☐ Where and how will you perform my procedure?
- ☐ How long of a recovery period can I expect, and what kind of help will I need during my recovery?
- ☐ What are the risks and complications associated with my procedure?
- ☐ How are complications handled?
- ☐ What are my options if I am dissatisfied with the cosmetic outcome of my spider vein treatment?
- ☐ Do you have before-and-after photos I can look at for each procedure and what results are reasonable for me?

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Notes

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