

Microsclerotherapy for thread and reticular veins

Patient information sheet and consent

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The procedure

A tiny needle is inserted into the affected veins under magnification and a small volume of a very dilute sclerosant drug (Sodium Tetradecyl Sulphate) is injected. Multiple injections into the veins of one or both legs will usually be performed in each session, typically lasting ten to fifteen minutes. The injections tend to sting slightly but are rarely painful. Usually several treatment sessions over a period of weeks will be required, depending on the extent of your veins, i.e. it is a course of treatment. Typically, four or five sessions are required. Treatments are usually performed at weekly intervals initially, but the time between treatments may increase as you get further into the course in order to allow the bruising to settle before continuing. Please note, if you are taking the Oral Contraceptive Pill ideally this should be stopped one month before commencing treatment, as it could slightly increase the risk of a deep vein thrombosis.

Following treatment small pads are placed over the injection sites and held in place with tape. A tight Tubigrip compression dressing is then applied and needs to remain in place for 24-48 hours. The compression dressing needs to be kept dry. You may continue normal exercise but we discourage hot baths or vigorous physical activities (e.g. running) for about one week after each treatment.

What to expect

The injected areas may feel slightly sore for one to two days after treatment. When the dressings are removed it is normal for there to be significant bruising at the injection sites. If you have had multiple injections at multiple sites the bruising can be quite extensive and may take several weeks to resolve. The veins usually look worse before getting better. Initially the blood that was in the vein at the time of the injection becomes fixed and dark, and it may appear as if someone has taken a black ball-point pen and drawn over your veins. As the dark colour recedes it tends to be replaced with brownish skin staining. The bruising and skin staining resolve over several weeks and the treated veins gradually disperse and disappear. It may take at least six to eight weeks after each session before the treated veins appear significantly better. Therefore, if you require a number of sessions it may be many weeks or even months before you derive the full benefit of treatment. This needs to be borne in mind if you are planning a holiday or special occasion.

The vast majority of patients are very pleased with the overall results of microsclerotherapy. Perfection is rarely achieved, but a very significant improvement in the appearance is realistic in most patients, regardless of the extent of the problem to start with. The appearance often continues to improve for many months after treatment. Perseverance and patience usually pay off! Unfortunately, some patients will take longer than others to respond.

Side effects

- Some patients may develop a small lump associated with an injected vein, especially with larger reticular veins. This may be painful and tender if thrombophlebitis occurs but will usually resolve after two to three weeks. Anti-inflammatory drugs (e.g. Brufen) may be helpful in this situation as well as wearing a support or compression stocking.

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- Occasionally, permanent bruises, blemishes and/or brownish or reddish stains in the skin at the site of the treated veins can occur; rarely, these may even appear worse than the veins did before treatment. Even if some skin staining does persist after the veins have disappeared most patients prefer this to the original veins.
- The injection may fail to obliterate the vein – however, this is extremely rare.
- Other side effects include a very small risk of a small, painful scab or ulcer developing at an injection site. This can be sore and may take a few weeks to heal. It may leave a small white scar in the skin similar to a vaccination mark. This is rare (less than 1 in 100 injections). Sometimes small skin blisters appear under the tape dressings or pads. These are usually due to friction between the skin and the dressing, but can also occur due to an allergy to the dressing. In most cases the blisters will completely resolve within a week or two. Rarely, there may be a local allergic skin reaction to the sclerosant drug itself. A generalised allergic reaction is exceptionally rare.

The future

As you are clearly predisposed to the formation of thread veins, it is likely that new or recurrent veins may develop in the future. In order to discourage the occurrence of further veins you should exercise as much as possible, maintain a normal weight, and consider wearing light support stockings or tights, particularly when standing for long periods. If more thread veins do develop, the treatment can always be repeated in the future.

Patient Label:

Consent: *(to be completed prior to treatment)*

I have read this consent form and understand the risks and side effects of microsclerotherapy treatment for thread veins and reticular veins. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and am happy to proceed with treatment to one or both legs.

Patient's signature.....Date.....

Witnessed:

Mr Simon AshleyDate.....

(Patient to take one copy, second copy to patient notes)