

| fact sheet |

SCLEROTHERAPY

VARICOSE & SPIDER VEIN TREATMENT

What are spider veins?

Spider veins, known in the medical world as telangiectasias or sunburst varicosities, are small, thin veins that lie close to the surface of the skin. Although these super-fine veins are connected with the larger venous system, they are not an essential part of it.

Spider veins usually take on one of three basic patterns. They may appear in a true spider shape with a group of veins radiating outward from a dark central point; they may be arborizing (branching out) and will resemble tiny branch-like shapes; or they may appear as thin separate lines.

How are varicose veins different from spider veins?

Varicose veins are larger than spider veins, usually more than a quarter-inch in diameter. They are darker in color and often tend to bulge. Varicose veins are also more likely to cause pain and be related to more serious vein disorders.

What causes varicose and spider veins?

Spider and varicose veins are almost always inherited. The risk of getting spider or varicose veins is greater if both parents are affected. Other factors that may aggravate the problem include pregnancy, hormonal shifts, weight gain, sun exposure, activities that re-



quire prolonged sitting or standing, and the use of certain medications.

How are treatments for varicose and spider veins performed?

Since spider veins are more superficial and smaller in diameter, the treatments are less invasive. Sclerotherapy is performed with tiny 32 gauge needles used to inject a safe solution into the spider veins that will cause them to collapse, shrivel and disappear. Lasers can also be used to collapse spider veins.

Varicose veins are treated by inserting a laser fiber into the larger varicose vein and applying laser energy to the vein as the laser fiber is withdrawn. The medical term is endovenous laser ablation of varicose veins.

The entire process is quick, effective and requires no downtime. It is a much simpler treatment than vein stripping surgery and is more efficient than radiofrequency treatments.

Another common method of varicose vein treatment is foam sclerotherapy. This procedure uses a foamed solution of sodium tetradecyl sulfate that is injected into the vein through a tiny needle. The foam effectively collapses the vein and over a period of weeks or months the vein is absorbed by the body.

What are the risks of treatments of varicose and spider veins?

On rare occasions, blisters, skin ulcers, scabs, scars and uneven skin pigmentation can occur after treatment for both spider and varicose veins. These side effects are not always predictable, but are more common if someone smokes or has an underlying disease, such as diabetes, that may affect the way the body heals.

Sometimes abnormal vascular shunts or malformed vascular channels exist genetically in the legs and may increase the risk of complications following treatment. Darker skin types are also at greater risk of abnormal pigmentation following treatment.

The greatest risk with varicose veins is that the veins may not collapse with just a single treatment.

Spider veins usually require a series of two or three treatments to achieve the best result.

Who can be treated for spider and varicose veins?

Anyone can be treated, but it is more difficult to treat pregnant women or people who cannot wear compression stockings following treatment.



Those who heal poorly or have other complicating diseases need to consult with their treating physicians to determine if treatment is appropriate.

How much experience does the Gateway Aesthetic Institute have in treating varicose and spider veins?

We have been treating varicose and spider veins for more than 20 years. We treat hundreds of patients annually with both lasers and sclerotherapy. We have been a member of the American Society of Phlebology since its inception.

If you are considering treatment for varicose or spider veins, call us at (801) 595-1600 to schedule a consultation. We are located at the south end of the Gateway Mall at 440 West 200 South, Suite 250, Salt Lake City, Utah 84101.