

# *Royal Berkshire Vein Clinic*

[www.royalberkshireveinclinic.co.uk](http://www.royalberkshireveinclinic.co.uk)

**Specialist treatment of leg and facial veins using  
surgery, sclerotherapy and Veinwave**

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## **Sclerotherapy of Thread Veins**

**Information for patients, December 2006**

Spider or thread veins are similar to varicose veins but are a lot smaller and closer to the surface of the skin. Spider veins are usually red or blue in colour and resemble a spider web pattern. They occur most often in women and usually appear on the face and the legs.

The most common causes of spider veins include: Prolonged standing or sitting. Defective valves in the underlying veins. Other factors that may play a role in the development of spider veins include: Heredity, hormonal changes, pregnancy and sun exposure.

Spider veins may be mildly uncomfortable but they are not medically a serious condition. To prevent spider veins and reduce discomfort from existing spider veins it is advisable to protect your skin from the sun, exercise regularly, control your weight, avoid prolonged sitting and standing, wear elastic support stockings.

Veinwave ( [www.veinwave.com](http://www.veinwave.com) )therapy is a cosmetic treatment for red spider or thread veins. This involves thermo-coagulation of these fine veins. The procedure is relatively painless and can be used for red veins on the legs. It is the only effective treatment for red veins on the face and nose. Please see Facial Veins section of my website ( [www.royalberkshireveinclinic.co.uk/veinwavefacialveins.htm](http://www.royalberkshireveinclinic.co.uk/veinwavefacialveins.htm) )and information pack.

Follow this link for press coverage of Veinwave and a video link from "This Morning" television programme [http://www.veinwave.com/press\\_1.html](http://www.veinwave.com/press_1.html)

Micro-injection sclerotherapy is another consulting room procedure. A solution is injected into the tiny veins to irritate the lining and cause them to seal off. They are then naturally reabsorbed. This process does take some weeks before a difference is seen.

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, you may be advised to postpone sclerotherapy or Veinwave treatment. It is not known how sclerosing solutions or other interventions may affect breast milk, nursing mothers are usually advised to wait until after they have stopped breastfeeding.

Sclerotherapy and Veinwave are just as effective for men who seek treatment.

## **Micro-injection Sclerotherapy**

Sclerotherapy is ideal for the treatment of bluish coloured thread veins. It is used in our clinic to supplement Veinwave treatment of red spider and thread veins.

Micro-injection sclerotherapy can enhance your appearance and your self confidence, but it is unrealistic to believe that every affected vein will disappear completely as a result of treatment. After each sclerotherapy session, more veins will begin to fade.

Three or more sessions are usually required to achieve optimal results these may be combined with Veinwave sessions. Before you decide to have thread veins treated, think carefully about your expectations and discuss them with your consultant surgeon.

### **Risks Related to Treatment**

Serious medical complications from sclerotherapy are extremely rare when the procedure is performed by a vascular surgeon. It does take some weeks for a noticeable difference to be seen. For the first two days after treatment the areas injected will look red and puffy. This inflammation is normal, does not feel uncomfortable and disappears completely. Veins may look more prominent after treatment before they are absorbed by the body's natural processes. Bruising on a very minor scale may be evident where the needle has been inserted. Occasionally small lumps may be felt. They are usually less than the size of half a pea. These will be absorbed over time. Rarely an area of injection may form a scab which can take weeks to resolve. A common cosmetic complication is pigmentation. Where veins have been absorbed marks can appear which are the colour of freckles. Most people feel that this is more acceptable than the original flares. Such staining does fade over some months. Another problem that can occur is pink matting in which fine reddish blood vessels appear around the treated area, requiring further injections or Veinwave therapy.

### **Planning Your Treatment**

During your initial consultation, your legs will be examined. Your surgeon may photograph or draw a simple sketch of your legs. During the examination, you will be checked for signs of more serious vein problems, especially underlying varicose veins. A hand-held Doppler ultrasound device is sometimes used to detect any backflow within the venous system. If such problems are identified, your surgeon may require further information from a leg duplex ultrasound scan. Problems with the larger veins should be treated first, or treatment of the surface veins may be less successful.

Your surgeon will ask you about any other problems you may have with your legs, such as pain, aching, itching or tenderness. You will also be asked about your medical history, medications you take, or conditions that would preclude you from having treatment.

### **Where is the Treatment Performed?**

Sclerotherapy of spider veins is a relatively simple procedure that requires no anaesthesia, so it will be performed in your surgeon's consulting rooms.

### **The Procedure**

A typical sclerotherapy session is relatively quick, lasting only about 15 to 20 minutes. The consultant surgeon will inject a sclerosing solution into the affected veins using an ultra-fine needle. Bright, indirect light and magnification help ensure that the process is completed with maximum precision. As the procedure continues, you will feel small needle sticks but the experience is very acceptable to most people.

### **Getting Back to Normal**

Although you probably won't want to wear any leg-baring fashions for about two weeks, your activity will not be significantly limited in any other way from sclerotherapy treatment. A one-month healing interval must pass before you may have your second series of injections in the same site. After each treatment, you will notice further improvement of your legs' appearance.

Over 80% of patients are pleased that they look better after sclerotherapy. If you've been wearing long skirts or trousers to hide your spider veins, you'll now be able to broaden your fashion horizons. Often, patients are surprised at the dramatic difference in appearance between a treated leg and an untreated one.

Although sclerotherapy will obliterate the noticeable veins for good, it is important to remember that treatment will not prevent new spider veins from emerging in the future. As time passes, you may find that you need "touch-ups" or full treatments for new veins that surface. But even if you choose not to have further sclerotherapy, your legs will look better than if you never had treatment at all.

This information is general in nature. It is for guidance only, your surgeon can advise you on specific information relating to your condition.

**December 2006**

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