

# PIMA DERMATOLOGY

ADULT / PEDIATRIC / COSMETIC / LASER & SKIN SURGERY

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## LASER TREATMENT FOR FACIAL BLOOD VESSELS / SPIDER VEIN TELANGIECTASIA

### **What is a "spider vein"?**

Many myths exist about so-called "spider veins". Many people call dilated blood vessels present on the face or leg "broken blood vessels". In reality, these often unsightly red blood vessels are the result of dilated blood vessels-telangiectasia (from telos = end, angio = vessel, ectasia = stretched).

### **What are the main types of dilated vessels?**

**There are two main types of blood vessel patterns:**

A) A true spider vein has a central feeder vessel with radiating fine vessels from a central dot or punctum. This is the classic "spider vein" which is often the result of trauma.

B) The second type are vessels that are either disconnected or spread like branches of a tree, so-called arborizing vessels, typical of essential telangiectasia. This is caused from heredity (especially white, fair Anglo-Saxons), sun-damaged skin, hormonal changes or changes associated with adult acne and the condition called rosacea.

### **Where do dilated vessels occur?**

Most commonly dilated vessels occur on the face, especially the cheeks and nose, or as clustered vessels of various sizes and patterns in the lower legs.

### **Are these dilated vessels dangerous or do they signal other problems?**

Usually these dilated vessels are not medically significant and are of cosmetic importance exclusively.

### **What are my treatment options for dilated facial blood vessels?**

The treatments available vary according to physician training and skill, availability of various Laser technologies, and cost. The simplest technique for isolated, fine, spider veins and localized dilated blood vessels is with the high frequency electric needle done in the office. The advantages are that the technique employed is readily available, relatively cheap and usually effective. The main risks are punctate scarring, small white skin scars or texture change as well as the possibility of recurrence.

### **What Laser treatments are available?**

The Cutera® Excel V is more powerful and versatile than the previous generations of Lasers used to treat redness and red lesions on the skin. It is effective in treating a number of conditions. This laser comes equipped with both a green light Laser for red lesions as well as an infrared Laser for blue vessels and skin toning and tightening. The number of treatments vary depending on the condition.

Another effective Laser to remove unwanted facial blood vessels, red facial for neck blemishes, or red birthmarks is the fourth generation yellow light Candela® Pulsed Dye Laser, the ("Vbeam").

### **How do these Lasers work?**

The various Lasers available all emit a powerful yellow or green light beam. Because it is visible light, it is not a harmful light source when targeting the unwanted vessels. These Lasers work on the principle of "selective photothermolysis". Keeping up with the latest technological advances and trends, the Cutera® Excel V Laser comes equipped with both a green light Laser for red lesions as well as an infrared Laser to diffuse facial redness and unwanted facial blood vessels. The green light Laser treatment for facial redness and red vessels comes equipped with a contact cooling device to assure minimal discomfort during the Laser treatment. The vessels are treated leaving the skin surface intact with mild redness and swelling for a few days following the treatment. This allows patients to quickly return to work and usual activities. While visible results can be seen with just one treatment, usually one or two additional treatments at monthly intervals may be necessary to achieve optimal results.

The Pulsed Dye Laser, the "VBeam" Laser, offers some significant improvements over previous versions of the device. The pulse duration is longer, giving more effective treatment of larger or resistant vessels, and with the longer pulse duration, the Vbeam has the ability to deliver Laser energy more slowly and gently to a non-purpura endpoint. In other words, we can now effectively treat some vascular entities (i.e. some vessels and some blush-like changes on the face) without leaving a purple bruise-like trace. The wavelength of light is slightly longer than previous models yielding better effects on slightly deeper vessels. There are different spot sizes and shapes to more efficiently treat long, discrete vessels. Higher peak powers are achievable with this Laser especially now that it is equipped with an effective "dynamic cooling device" to cool and protect the skin surface during treatment. The cooling spray is synchronized with each pulse, which decreases any discomfort with treatment and protects the skin surface from injury as higher powers are delivered to underlying vessels. No anesthesia is usually necessary. Often a second touch-up treatment or a series of treatments is required for facial vessels, whereas multiple treatments are almost always needed when treating a significant red birthmark.

### **What can I expect following treatment and what is the downtime?**

After the treatment, the skin usually appears red and there can be mild to moderate swelling for several days. Larger vessels (i.e. on the nose) can turn slightly purple but this rarely lasts more than a few days. On occasion, a slight whitish discoloration or a small crust can occur over the treated vessel for several days. Usually the treatments are very well-tolerated. Many conditions require two or more treatment sessions to obtain optimal improvement. The great advantage is that with many or most treatments there is little significant skin reaction and little "downtime" from daily activities. These Lasers are also available in our office on a once or twice monthly basis.

### **Can injection treatments be done on facial veins as with leg veins?**

Injection therapy is almost always the treatment of choice for unwanted leg veins. Laser therapy is not the treatment of choice for leg veins because it is expensive, more painful and may lead to long-lasting discoloration at treatment sites on the lower legs. On rare occasions, large caliber vessels on the face can be injected with a solution, which irritates the inner vessel lining and slowly closes off the vessels. Repeated injections are usually necessary and this is done in office and is quick and very cost-effective. There is risk of temporary pigmentation change and a rare possibility of scarring.

### **What are the risks of the procedure?**

The most common side effects involve bruising and temporary swelling of the skin for a number of days after treatment. Some temporary skin discoloration can occur for a short time after the treatment, but usually this clears with skin bleaching creams and time. Infection following the procedure is rare, as is the risk of scarring which occurs in less than 1% of treated patients.

### **What is the cost of the treatment and does my insurance pay for it?**

The cost of the treatment varies as to the number and location of the vessels treated the complexity of the problem, as well as the time spent in treatment. A typical treatment session involving a modest sized area on the nose or a cheek may cost \$250-\$350. A large area involving much of the face may cost \$500 or more.

Unfortunately insurance companies will not reimburse you for the cost of these treatments and will usually consider them cosmetic or not medically necessary.

Payment for the procedure will be discussed prior to the procedure and payment will be expected prior to the time of service unless specific arrangements have been made with the Office Manager prior to the treatment date.

A consultation is required prior to any Laser or treatment scheduling. Please contact our office for a consultation at **520.795.7729** or to learn more about the treatment options. For more information, please visit **[www.pimaderm.com](http://www.pimaderm.com)**.