

PIMA DERMATOLOGY

ADULT / PEDIATRIC / COSMETIC / LASER & SKIN SURGERY

Injection Sclerotherapy / Treatment of Spider Veins

Spider Veins, known medically as Telangiectasia, are dilated skin capillaries and are frequently an inherited tendency. Veins may be red (arterial capillaries) or blue (venous capillaries) in color and most people have both types. The microinjection technique consists of instilling a solution into these tiny capillaries using a needle so small that a magnifying lens is required. This irritates the inner lining of the capillaries so they cease to carry blood and the body slowly replaces them with scar tissue without harming the circulation. Several injections may be needed for a specific area of telangiectasia. Some brown freckling may appear after injection which gradually fades, but a small amount may be permanent. The goal is to produce about 75-80% improvement. Pain during injections is described by patients as very slight. Fading is a slow process and maximum improvement may require many months. Results of treatments cannot be guaranteed, but most patients are very pleased with the cosmetic improvement.

Charges relate to the amount of time spent by the doctor and the amount of medication required. Actual injection is done only by the doctor rather than a nurse or assistant. A full treatment costs \$425.00. A preliminary consultation must be scheduled to better determine your approximate expense and anticipated results. Consultations range from \$70.00 - \$125.00 depending on questions presented and coordination of care involved. This procedure is generally not covered by medical insurance; it is considered a cosmetic procedure. *All fees for these cosmetic services must be paid at the time of the visit.*

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Common Questions Asked:

1. **What is used?** Usually Sotradecol, .1-1%, will be used. The concentration and quality of solution used depends on the size and length of the vessel treated. Sotradecol is an FDA approved agent. On occasion, a concentrated saline solution (Sodium Chloride), 18-25% or Aethoxysklerol, .25-1% is used.
2. **Is there any way to prevent them?** Some authorities feel the use of support hose is helpful. Exercising and reducing your weight may also help.
3. **How often can I be treated?** It is preferable to inject the same area after 4-6 weeks of healing.
4. **How many times will I need to be treated?** This varies with the number of areas that need to be injected, as well as the response to each injection. It usually takes 2-3 injections to obliterate any vessel.
5. **How should I dress for the procedure?** It's advisable to wear loose-fitting shorts and loose clothing.
6. **Is this method superior to laser?** This procedure is usually more effective and less painful than most laser treatments. The laser is a more expensive treatment and is usually reserved for vessels which are too small to inject or ones that do not respond to injections.
7. **How does it work?** The solution works by irritating the tiny cells lining the blood vessels, which closes the vessels slowly over time.
8. **Are there any special instructions after the procedure?** Pressure dressing should be worn until bedtime. Strenuous physical activity or prolonged periods of standing should be avoided on the first 24 hours. Support hose should be worn 2-3 weeks.

Please see reverse side of page.

9. **Are there certain kinds of spider veins that cannot be treated?** Generally speaking, the larger the vessel the more difficult it is to eradicate. The blue vessels, which are very small varicose veins, can also be treated. These require frequent injections with tiny amounts of solution plus compression dressing for maximal effect. Some of the extremely small vessels must be treated with electrodesiccation (electrocautery).

10. **What are the side effects?**

- a) 95% of the patients have none and the vessels slowly disappear.
- b) Slight blistering when small amounts of solution seep into the skin. This blistering heals quickly, but occasionally a small amount of pigmentation can persist indefinitely at the injection site. This pigmentation is easily treated with appropriate bleaching agents.
- c) Bruising occasionally, when the vessels are very weak, bruising can result which can last anywhere from 2 weeks to 2 years. Slight stinging or pain can also be observed when the solution is being injected.
- d) A clot could develop at the injection site, but will never cause internal problems, but its removal within 2 weeks of the injection will speed up the healing process.
- e) Swelling, occasionally severe, is noted. It is particularly common when patients have jobs in which they stand for long periods of time, or in which vessels in the ankle or lower portions of the legs are involved. The swelling is never dangerous, but occasionally must be treated with elevation and compression dressing.
- f) Superficial Thrombophlebitis; an irritation of the vessels closest to the skin. It sometimes needs to be treated with anti-inflammatory agents and bed rest. This probably occurs in less than 1 case per 1000.

11. **How soon will the vessels disappear?** Each vessel will require 2-3 injections. Usually the vessels disappear over a period of 2 weeks to 2 months. Recurrences can occur over a period of 1-5 years. This treatment does not prevent new telangiectasia from occurring.

Treatment Tips:

- 1. Bring loose-fitting shorts to wear during the procedure; do not wear tight clothing day of treatment.
- 2. Bring your medical-grade, pantyhose-style support hose with you to your appointment.
- 3. Avoid vigorous physical activity for 2 weeks. Walking and normal daily activities can be resumed immediately. Your legs will look worse before they start looking better. Many patients need multiple weeks for the bruising and discoloration to fade.
- 4. As you are required to wear support hose and there is bruising and swelling associated with the treatment, it is advisable to schedule treatments several weeks prior to or after special occasions, events, or vacations that might be impacted by these factors.

Please contact us at 520.795.7729 if you have any questions or concerns.