



Say "Goodbye" to Varicose Veins

By Deanna Huntwork, DO, Lincoln Hospital



Varicose veins are the most common vascular disorder that affects human beings. They can be painful, unsightly and embarrassing. Fortunately, through technology, they are getting easier to treat.

A varicose vein is any dilated (big), long, tortuous vein most often found in the legs. They are often red or purple in color and bulging. Symptoms you might recognize include leg heaviness or aching due to pooling of blood in larger veins. Often, there are no symptoms at all – just ugly red or purple blemishes.

Mostly seen in women, varicose veins are often caused by female sex hormones and having babies. A tendency toward varicose veins can be in the family tree or from jobs where folks stand in one spot for prolonged periods especially on hard surfaces.

The good news is these veins are generally not being used to carry blood, so they can often be closed permanently through a simple procedure done at Lincoln Hospital called Sclerotherapy.

In Sclerotherapy, a solution which causes the vessel to collapse and gradually disappear is injected into the vein with a microneedle. Because the microneedle is so small, there is very little pain. Some patients report a mild burning sensation when the solution is injected, but the sensation goes away in just a few seconds. The procedure is convenient as patients can have it done on a simple out-patient basis.

Most veins disappear within two weeks to two months after treatment. However, complete correction of the vein does not always happen with the first injection and a second treatment may be needed for optimal results.

After treatment, patients are generally encouraged to resume normal activities within 24-hours (except no exercising for two weeks) and walking is helpful to increase blood flow and stimulate healing. To keep pressure on the area, patients are required to wear special heavy duty stockings or Ace Bandages. This reduces bruising and helps keep the treated veins closed.

Bruising usually disappears after one week while brownish pigments in the area may be evident for up to eight weeks. Most patients experience a 60 to 80 percent improvement after a Sclerotherapy treatment.

An alternative treatment for smaller spider veins is Intensed Pulsed Light Treatment (PhotoDerm), which is also available locally. PhotoDerm not only minimizes smaller spider veins, it is used to treat age and sun spots, freckles, red wine stains, birth marks, tatoos, and excess hair with little, if any, pain and no down time.

Although most insurance companies do not cover Sclerotherapy or PhotoDerm, we are happy to explore all options for payment with you, including talking with your insurance carrier. Cost of the procedure depends on the number of treatments so if you're interested, call my office for a consultation.

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