

## Sclerotherapy

The venous system of the body can be thought of in two large components. One component is deep inside the body next to the bones and muscles. This valved systems primary function is to drain/ pump venous blood back to the heart. The second venous system is localized under your skin. The vessels are much smaller in caliber but, have a greater surface area. Its primary function is to assist in thermoregulation. It is for this superficial system that patients commonly request sclerotherapy treatment. Predisposing factors include a hereditary tendency, pregnancy and trauma.

Sclerotherapy is the injection of a foreign substance into vessels aiming to create venous wall damage leading to occlusion of that vessel. The most common fluids injected to the superficial venous systems are osmotic solutions like hypertonic saline and detergent solutions like sodium morrhuate. Sclerotherapy can be utilized on small telangietasia's to large varicosities. But, physician evaluation is important prior to the procedure. If you have a history of deep venous thrombosis, pulmonary embolus, infections of superficial veins (phlebitis) or vein stripping you may not be a candidate for this procedure.

Sclerotherapy is commonly performed as an office procedure with no anesthesia. Compression is commonly applied after the procedure to assist in occlusion of these superficial vessels. It may take several months to see the final results. Full activity is usually returned to in a few days. A period of bruising may occur for several weeks.

The underlying disease process is not corrected by sclerotherapy so, you may require additional procedures as the years pass. Laser ablation of superficial blood vessels can also be performed but, it is often more costly. Consult with your plastic surgeon as to which procedure would be best for your condition.