**Ontario Vein Clinics**

**INFORMATION PAMPHLET**

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**WHAT ARE VARICOSE VEINS? HOW ARE THEY FORMED?**

Varicose veins are permanently enlarged veins in the legs.

They range in size from large ropy to small broken capillaries also known as “spider veins”

Genetics, pregnancy, weight gain, sitting/standing for long periods cause this to happen in the body.

Varicose veins are part of the superficial system of veins which return only 10% of the blood from the legs to the heart- the rest is handled by the deep system.

Because varicose veins are enlarged, the blood is not moving through them efficiently, so the body has already channeled the blood into other, healthy veins.

**HOW DO YOU TREAT VARICOSE VEINS?**

Sclerotherapy is used in treating varicose veins, as well as surgery.

**WHAT IS SCLEROTHERAPY? HOW DOES IT WORK?**

Sclerotherapy is the destruction of varicose veins by injection of a solution directly into the vein.

This medication/process irritates the inner vein walls, causing them to thicken and seal off the vein.

Gradually, the body coverts most sclerosed veins into scar tissue which cannot be seen or felt.

**There are two types of sclerotherapy**

1. Simple sclerotherapy for all sized of veins
2. Compression sclerotherapy for the larger/ bulgy veins (support stockings are required for this type of sclerotherapy)

**DOES SCLEROTHERAPY REPLACE SURGERY?**

In most cases, yes.

However, surgery such as vein stripping, gluing and Endovenous Laser Treatment(EVLT) may also help with the management of venous problems.

**IS SIMPLE SCLEROTHERAPY COVERED BY OHIP?**

No, because it is considered cosmetic by the ministry.

You pay a fee directly to the clinic, and upon your consultation the Dr. will discuss the different treatment options available to you along with the costs.

**IS COMPRESSION SCLEROTHERAPY COVERED BY OHIP?**

If you get the larger veins injected, it may be partially covered by OHIP. You would just be paying for the cost of the medication used for injections which is not covered by OHIP.

**FOR BOTH: some insurances cover the cost if you submit a claim/end of year taxes may cover the cost.**

**PRE/POST INSTRUCTIONS/ INFORMATION**

**BEFORE YOU GET SCLEROTHERAPY**

1. Do not shave your legs the day of
2. Do not put oil/cream on your legs

**AFTER CARE INSTRUCTIONS**

**Simple Sclerotherapy**

1. Keep cotton balls/ tape on legs for 2 hours then remove with oil to prevent tape marks
2. Do not go to bed with the tape on your legs
3. Avoid direct sunlight on injection spot for at least 3 days

**Compression Sclerotherapy**

1. Follow the simple sclerotherapy rules
2. Wear the compression stockings over the cotton balls/ tape for the remainder of the day
3. It is advised that you wear compression stockings regularly to help with varicose veins

**DAILY ACTIVITIES**

You are encouraged to continue with your normal daily activities, and exercise is encouraged.

**POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF SCLEROTHERAPY**

1. **Most common**: bruising (lasts 2-4 weeks)
2. **Occasionally**: tender/ red hard lumps after treatment of the larger veins- these may be uncomfortable, but they are not permanent/ dangerous- treat with warm, wet compress
3. **Sometimes**: after injections of large veins, spider veins may appear- these can be treated with sclerotherapy
4. **Rarely**: discolouration of the skin (similar to freckling) - most areas will fade gradually but some may be permanent

**ARE THERE ANY RISKS TO SCLEROTHERAPY?**

Complications are very rare

Allergic reaction to the drug injected ranging from tingling/itching of the skin(mild) to shock(severe)

Ulceration of the skin from the sclerosing solution being injected outside the vein

Blood clots (deep vein phlebitis, pulmonary embolus) are, in theory possible, however no cases of blood clots from sclerotherapy have ever been reported in Canada.

**DO VARICOSE VEINS COME BACK?**

Once sclerosis is complete, the vein is closed and usually will not return. However, sclerotherapy is a control, not a cure, so because the body forms new veins, varicose veins are possible to return, so follow up on a regular basis. (every 6 months- 1 year)

**Any questions/ problems feel free to contact us via e-mail or phone:**

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