



## **SCLEROTHERAPY**

Sclerotherapy is the gold standard for the treatment of unwanted spider or reticular veins on the thighs and legs. In this procedure, the physician injects a small amount of sclerosing solution into the vein. The solution irritates the lining of the treated vein, causing it to swell and helping to prevent blood from re-entering the vein. Over the next several weeks, the treated vein will transform into scar tissue and become less noticeable or invisible.

There is no ideal sclerosant available, although the most commonly used sclerosants quite satisfactory. These include hypertonic saline, sodium tetradecyl sulfate, and polidocanol. The sclerosing solution is injected into the unwanted veins, using a syringe and a small gauge needle. At the end of the procedure, the patient will most likely be asked to keep the veins compressed for about two weeks. This involves wearing support hose or using compression bandages.

As with any procedure, there are some possible side effects. Temporary redness or hives may develop at the site of injection. Brown discoloration may also occur in the area treated, but this usually resolves within 6 months. Rarely, small ulcers may occur, but these can be treated. Most importantly, re-treatment may be necessary.

Jennifer L. Parish, MD  
Philadelphia, PA, USA