Sclerotherapy is an innovative treatment used to eliminate varicose veins and improve the appearance of the skin. During this procedure, the surgeon will inject a special chemical, called sclerosant, into the varicose vein. This chemical (usually a saline solution) will cause the inside lining of the vein to scar and close, forcing the blood to reroute its passage through healthier veins.

The collapsed vein, now rendered unusable, will be reabsorbed into the local tissue until it fades away. It takes about a few weeks for the treated veins to start to fade, but it may take up to a full month to see results.

This procedure is done in the doctor's office and can take anywhere from 5-30 minutes to complete, dependent on how many varicose veins you have as well as their size. After the injection is made, the doctor will apply pressure over the veins to prevent the blood from returning to the affected area. You may also have to wear a compression stocking for a few days or weeks after the procedure to maintain the pressure. It is also important to note that you may need more than one session to gain the desired results.

There is a newer, minimally invasive method of sclerotherapy that lets doctors inject the sclerosant chemical with a catheter. Both the sclerosant and the catheter are guided to the varicose vein with a duplex ultrasound. This innovative laser treatment allows sclerotherapy to be performed on bigger varicose veins that could only be treated surgically before.

After-Treatment Expectations

It will please you to know that generally sclerotherapy doesn't require a recovery period. In fact, you will most likely be able to walk right after the treatment. Still, it is recommended that you take it easy for at least 24-48 hours after treatment. This doesn't mean that you should lay in your bed all day, but that you should avoid any strenuous activity. It's also important to note that you shouldn't expose your legs to the sun for the first couple of weeks after the procedure.

Keep the stocking, bandage, and compression pads on for at least five days. Once this period is up, remove the bandage and pads, and replace the stocking -- wear it for one more week. During this 7 day period, it is recommended that you wear the stocking the majority of the time, it's OK to remove it to shower and at night.

Important Considerations

Before you choose to use this method to treat your varicose veins, there are some points that should be considered. Some of them include:

1. This procedure in not recommended for those who meet the following criteria:
   ** Are nursing or pregnant
   ** Are allergic to sclerosant or similar chemicals
   ** Have inflammation or blood clots in the deep leg veins, also known as deep vein thrombosis

2. It may take about 2 or 3 sessions of treatment to get rid of your varicose veins, this is dependent on the number of varicose veins in the affected area as well as their size. Larger veins typically respond to treatments withing 3 to 4
months.

3. There are some side effects that may occur at the site of injection, they include:

   ** Small sores
   ** Bruising
   ** Raided red areas
   ** Darkened skin

All the above side effects typically disappear within a couple of days to several weeks.

4. There is a risk of infection of any procedure where the skin is penetrated. But, it's also important to note that the chance of an infection that will require antibiotic treatment is less than one in 1,000.

5. Smaller varicose veins respond better to this treatment than larger ones. Also, 10% of people who try this treatment do not respond to the injections at all. Thankfully, if this occurs, doctors can try different solutions to see if they will provide better results.

6. If your veins respond to treatment, they will not reappear. But, it is possible for new veins to appear over time. If this occurs, it's possible to seek additional injections for these as well.

7. Larger varicose veins may become hard or lumpy for several months before they are completely reabsorbed.

About USA Vein Clinic Atlanta

USA Vein Clinic Atlanta is a state of the art facility dedicated to the treatment of venous insufficiency. In our clinic, cardiovascular doctors specializing exclusively in problems with circulation provide comprehensive evaluation and treatment utilizing the most modern equipment and individual approach to all and each of our patients.

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