

ULTRASOUND GUIDED FOAM SCLEROTHERAPY

What can be treated?

This technique can be used to manage large varicose veins. The method can be used alone or in conjunction with the thermal ablation methods, RF ablation and laser ablation. Some patients have undergone many previous treatments for varicose veins but have not achieved a satisfactory result. Skilled ultrasound guided injection of the remaining veins leads to an excellent outcome in such cases.

What cannot be treated?

Very large, extensive varices may be treated by surgery. Small varicose veins less than 3 mm in diameter and thread veins are best treated by microsclerotherapy using a standard sclerosing solution.

How is this treatment given?

Foam sclerotherapy is performed in the consulting room with the help of an injection of local anaesthetic. This treatment causes very minor discomfort in most people and is complete in 20-30 minutes. The aim is to inject and destroy the main surface vein which is causing the varicose veins. The great saphenous vein is injected above and below the knee and the small saphenous on the back of the calf. Several fine plastic tubes are placed within the vein with the help of ultrasound imaging. The leg being treated is elevated to empty all the surface veins. The foam is prepared and injected into the vein. The foam rapidly spreads along the vein and is followed using the ultrasound machine. Injection of foam continues as the foam spreads into the varicose veins. Usually 4 – 8 injections of foam are needed altogether. Foam is painless to inject.

What does the injection feel like?

The injection is not painful and normally causes no unusual feelings in the leg, although aching may be felt for a few minutes after the treatment. Paracetamol or Nurofen may be taken for any remaining discomfort.

Compression regime.

Following foam injections, we apply a firm bandage and compression stocking to the leg. The bandage can be removed after 5-7 days. You may do this yourself, it is easy to do. Just

take off the stocking and cut along the front of the bandage from top to bottom. You should see a large improvement in the appearance of your leg. A strong elastic stocking should be worn continuously for a further 4-7 days.

Effects of treatment.

Most patients are able to leave the clinic immediately after treatment. A few people experience a cough or tightness in the chest. Migraine sufferers sometimes experience the visual disturbance that occurs before a migraine attack. All of these symptoms resolve within 20 – 30 mins.

What is it like after the injections?

Immediately after the injection treatment patients are able to walk normally and continue their work. No special exercise need be taken. It is not necessary to rest. We suggest that long haul air travel (over 4 hours) is avoided whilst the bandages are in place, but other journeys can be continued as normal. Once the bandages have been removed long haul air travel is acceptable providing elastic compression stockings are worn. Vigorous exercise should be avoided for the first week. The leg may ache initially, and this continues for 2 – 4 weeks, but is not troublesome. Some patients need to take simple pain killers for this.

Further sessions.

We like to check that the treatment has worked and treat any remaining varicose veins one or two weeks following the main treatment. You will be given an appointment for this. We normally treat one leg at a time. Therefore, if varicose veins affect both legs further treatment to the other leg is given at the second visit followed by a check two weeks later. For one leg, two sessions are needed, and for both legs three sessions.

What happens next?

Large varicose veins are eliminated following this treatment. Bruising is commonly seen but resolves in about 8 weeks. Sometimes veins appear to turn into lumps and can still be felt beneath the skin. They are not usually visible from the surface. Trapped blood in these veins is removed with a needle. Any remaining lumps will slowly resolve over 3 – 6 months. Often pale brown discoloration appears where large veins have been injected. This also gradually resolves over 3 – 6 months.

Occasionally a varicose vein becomes a painful lump following this treatment. This is called 'thrombophlebitis' and can be treated under local anaesthetic by inserting a needle and removing trapped blood from the vein causing the problem. Otherwise this will usually settle without treatment over about 2 weeks. Rarely it may last a few weeks. This is a feature of treatment by sclerotherapy and is not hazardous in any way.

Rarely thrombosis may spread to the deep veins following injections of any type for varicose veins. If the leg swells, becomes painful or suffers cramps you should contact the office immediately for advice and a consultation. You should contact this office for advice should any other matter arise in connection with your treatment.

This treatment may result in the development of thread veins in the region of treatment in susceptible people. These may be treated by microsclerotherapy, if necessary. A very rare complication is accidental injection of an artery which may lead to severe and extensive damage to the tissues of the leg leading to ulceration of the skin. Further extremely rare complications include damage to sensory nerves, heart attack and stroke.

Follow-up

It is essential that you return after 6 months so that we can assess the final outcome and treat any residual veins. Please bring compression stockings to this appointment in case further injections are required.

Advantages of foam sclerotherapy.

- Avoids the need for hospital admission, surgery and general anaesthesia.
- Results in minor discomfort during treatment and only minimal bruising compared to surgery.
- All treatment is performed as an outpatient and little or no time is required off work.
- Much less expensive than laser treatment or varicose vein surgery.

Disadvantages of foam sclerotherapy.

- Usually only one leg is treated per appointment.
- More clinic attendances required than for surgical treatment (usually 3 appointments if both legs are treated).
- A few months are required for final outcome to be obtained with resolution of all bruising and lumps.
- May produce thread veins in some people. (These may also appear following surgical treatment for varicose veins.)
- Further varicose veins sometimes appear after a period of months or years.

NICE and the MHRA (medicines licensing)

NICE has considered and approved Foam Sclerotherapy for use in the NHS. Foam Sclerotherapy has been widely used in many centres and is recognised as an appropriate method of managing varicose veins. The safety and efficacy of this treatment has been established by extensive research.

The MHRA has confirmed the safety of this treatment and licensed the drug Fibrovein® for use in Foam Sclerotherapy in the UK.

Insurance companies

Foam Sclerotherapy is recognised by medical insurance companies for the treatment of symptomatic varicose veins. Patients should contact their insurers to establish their eligibility for benefit under the terms of their insurance before treatment commences. For further information and appointments please contact:

Mr Philip Coleridge Smith - Mr John Scurr

British Vein Institute

The Lister Hospital, Chelsea Bridge Road
London SW1W 8RH

4 Upper Wimpole St, London W1G 6LF
24-28 The Broadway, Amersham HP7 0HP

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Foam sclerotherapy info PCS-2020-v1

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www.bvi.uk.com



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Registered in England Company No. 04368965



**ULTRASOUND GUIDED
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Injections for large varicose veins

ULTRASOUND GUIDED FOAM SCLEROTHERAPY

After your treatment

I have treated your varicose veins using foam sclerotherapy.

Please keep the bandages and stockings on your leg without removing them for 7 days.

After this, remove the stocking and the bandage, and then put the stocking back on again for 7 more days. You may take the stocking off at night if you wish once the bandage has been removed.

What to expect

The leg may ache slightly for a few days. After two or three weeks you may find that the region of the varicose veins is a little tender and lumpy. This is normal and will settle slowly. The varicose veins usually disappear completely, however this may take many weeks to complete. Occasionally some of the lumps become very tender and red. This can be managed by wearing the stocking and taking analgesics such as Nurofen or paracetamol. The problem is due to trapped blood in the vein which I can remove through a needle under local anaesthetic if you arrange an appointment through my office.

Swelling of the calf, ankle and foot are commonly seen after foam sclerotherapy and are due to the healing process as veins heal and are absorbed by the body following treatment. This problem is best treated by wearing the elastic stocking for a little longer.

Activities after treatment

You should continue normal activities although I recommend avoiding vigorous exercise until the bandages have been removed. Any other type of exercise, such as walking, is perfectly acceptable.

A vigorous regime of walking for 3 miles per day is **NOT** required (this won't make the veins heal any faster). I recommend that you do not run whilst you are wearing the bandage and start vigorous exercise gently once the bandage has been removed.

In the shower

While you are wearing the bandage, you can take a bath but will have to hang the bandaged leg out of the bath! Alternatively, you can wrap the leg in a bin liner or cling film and take a shower!! A professionally made sleeve can be obtained – 'Limbo' type M80LL or M100 – for about £17 at Boots, John Bell and Croydon, Wigmore St, London W1 or telephone Limbo Products on 01243 573417 (£12 - www.limboproducts.co.uk). You will need a full-length sleeve.

Removing the bandage

To remove the bandage, first peel off the stocking and then cut the bandage down the front from top to bottom using scissors and taking care not to injure your leg. Soaking the sticky tape in the bath or shower will help to release this. Nail varnish remover can be used to remove the adhesive and blue pen marks.

Air travel during treatment

I suggest that long haul air travel is avoided whilst the bandages are in place, but other journeys can be continued as normal. Once the bandages have been removed long haul air travel is acceptable providing elastic compression stockings are worn. This minimises the risk of deep vein thrombosis following long haul air travel for all people of all ages. DO NOT take aspirin to prevent DVT following air travel – this treatment is not effective at preventing DVT (Advice received from the Department for Health).

Management of lumps after treatment

Tender lumps and bruising are common features of the resolution of varicose veins following injection treatment. These can be managed by wearing the stockings and taking analgesia, such as Nurofen. They sometimes appear several weeks or even months after treatment. Some lumps are red and very tender. Do not worry about the lumps, they are entirely safe. Please contact us should you need advice about this problem.

Bring the stockings with you

Please bring your stockings with you to the next consultation, even if you are not using them at the time. I may need to put them on again after any further treatment.

Telephone advice after treatment

Please contact the British Vein Institute office should you need any advice about the treatment you have received. The administrative and nursing team will be delighted to answer your questions.

Tel: 0870 609 2389 / 01494 257476

Appointments@adsum.uk.com

Outside office hours

Should you have a problem outside our normal office hours, please contact Mr Coleridge Smith directly via phone, text or email. Please do not seek advice from other sources unless you have difficulty in obtaining a response from us.

Tel: 07850 232525

PCS@adsum.uk.com

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Post-treatment information