



VeinSolutions™

a division of
CARDIOTHORACIC AND VASCULAR SURGEONS, P.A.

Important notice: This guide can not replace the expert advise of your doctor. Be sure to make an appointment with VeinSolutions Austin or consult your physician when you are ready to treat your vein condition.

Think you've got a vein disorder? You're not alone. In the United States approximately 80 million adults have varicose and "spider" veins of the legs. Spider veins alone occur in more than 60% of adult women. These veins can cause pain and discomfort in addition to cosmetic concerns. The good news? You needn't suffer. Vein problems can be successfully treated, and with modern techniques, successful outcomes are highly likely. This is especially true of spider veins, the most common vein disorder. Below you'll find valuable information to help you decide whether vein treatment is right for you.

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FAQ A Patient Guide

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1 What type of vein problem do I have?

- If you have red to purple, thread-like veins within the skin, most likely you have **spider veins**. They are most commonly seen on the legs but may form on the face as well. They will temporarily disappear when you press down on them.



Spider Veins

- If you have ropy veins that often bulge out while standing, chances are you've got **varicose veins**. Varicose veins are soft and spongy and will diminish in appearance or even disappear when lying down or elevating the legs.



Varicose Veins

- The best qualified treatment clinics will utilize venous duplex ultrasound scanning to visualize a vein to determine the exact anatomy, direction of blood flow within and to assess for abnormal valves. With this improved ultrasound technology the physician is better able to diagnosis underlying problems and prescribe a treatment plan tailored to a patient's individual needs. This is important to achieve the best long-term cosmetic and therapeutic results. The test is non-invasive, no preparation is needed and it takes approximately 30 to 60 minutes to complete. Venous duplex scanning is a

diagnostic test and is typically a covered expense by most insurance companies.

2 Does my problem require treatment?

In general, varicose veins indicate an underlying circulation problem that usually requires treatment. Spider veins are more of a cosmetic problem, but some people do experience discomfort that can respond to treatment.

3 What are varicose veins?

Varicose veins are abnormal superficial veins that develop in the soft tissue beneath the skin, largely due to leaking valves. They may become abnormally thick or enlarged, painful and are full of twists and turns. They can form anywhere in the body, but generally occur more commonly in the legs and thighs. Varicose veins tend to be inherited and become more prominent with age. Approximately 50% of those with varicose leg veins are bothered by symptoms such as:

- Leg fatigue
- Aches
- Burning and pain especially after prolonged standing
- Night cramps
- Leg and ankle swelling
- Increase in symptoms during the menstrual cycle

4 What are spider veins?

Spider veins are the result of a genetic condition which causes the veins to dilate, leading to "wispy" superficial veins at the surface of the skin. Spider veins are very common and are increasingly found with the progression of age. They are normally considered a cosmetic condition.



5 *When should I seek treatment?*

It is best to have your legs evaluated as soon as you notice a problem. It is possible that you could experience significant relief with simple lifestyle changes and compression stockings. In fact, some insurance companies require a trial of this “conservative management” before they consider the treatment medically necessary. More severe problems such as open sores, tender red veins, leg swelling or bleeding veins require urgent attention.

6 *Are there ways I can treat my vein problems myself?*

Varicose veins most often require the treatment of a medical professional, but the following treatments can be beneficial:

- Elevate your legs when possible, keeping your feet positioned higher than heart level.
- Exercise daily. Walking, climbing stairs, cycling and swimming keep your calf muscles in motion to activate the calf muscle pump.



- Move your legs frequently. Flexing your ankles periodically will pump the blood out of your legs (simulating walking). During periods of prolonged sitting or standing flex your ankles 10 times and repeat this every 10 minutes. Try to avoid sitting for extended periods throughout your day.
- Use support compression hose. This provides external graduated counter-pressure to aid in venous blood flow to the heart.

For spider veins, in addition to the above treatments you can try:

- Maintaining your ideal body weight to reduce pressure on your legs.
- Avoid prolonged sitting or standing.
- Activate your calf muscle pump by moving your feet up and down on long car or plane rides.
- Take frequent short walks.

7 *What happens if my vein problem is not treated?*

If you choose no therapy, the existing varicose and “spider” veins may progress and new veins may form. You should be re-evaluated periodically to monitor your condition for changes.

8 *What medical treatments are available, and which is best for me?*

A variety of treatment options is available, but only your physician will be able to determine which procedure(s) are right for you. Here are brief descriptions of the most common treatment options:



Sclerotherapy

Sclerotherapy is an injection treatment used to eliminate spider veins and small to medium size varicose veins. Injections are made using a tiny needle which causes minimal discomfort. The treatment is performed in the clinic or physician's office. There is no pre-treatment preparation. This form of treatment is typically considered cosmetic. Most people will notice a dramatic improvement approximately four weeks after their initial treatment.

VNUS Closure™ Procedure

This procedure is clinically-proven to treat varicose veins and their underlying cause, venous reflux, with little or no pain. A tiny catheter powered by radio-frequency (RF) energy will be positioned in such a way as to deliver heat to the vein wall. As the thermal energy is delivered, the vein wall shrinks and the vein is sealed closed. Closure patients can walk away from the vein procedure and be back to everyday activities typically within a day.

Laser Light Therapy



This is the latest technology in the treatment of spider veins and vascular birthmarks. This non-invasive procedure (no needles, injections, or incisions!) uses intense light to heat the blood inside the vein and damage the vein wall. The body then breaks down and absorbs the damaged vein causing the vein to fade. When healing is complete, the vein is no longer visible. Depending on the size of the vein, one to three treatments may be necessary. A person can resume their routine activities immediately after a treatment.

Phlebectomy



Surgery is not indicated for the treatment of small varicose or spider veins, but for larger varicose veins, surgery may be the treatment of choice. Surgical removal of varicosities is used to relieve symptoms of pain or swelling that often occur, while achieving the best cosmetic results. If you have an underlying problem, surgery may be required before proceeding with sclerotherapy or light therapy. Today, with the combination of venous duplex imaging technology and the meticulous surgical techniques of vascular surgeons, patients **are** able to achieve optimal cosmetic and therapeutic results.



9 How much will my treatment cost?

Costs will vary based upon the procedure or procedures you need. If the procedure you require is covered by insurance and your physician is a provider with your plan, then the fees are determined by your insurance company.

10 Will my insurance pay for treatment?

Getting insurance coverage for varicose veins can be complicated. Each plan has its own requirements before considering the treatment “medically necessary”. The physician must know what each plan requires in order to qualify you for coverage. If there is a problem with the medical records, your claim can be denied. A dedicated vein specialist will have worked through these challenges and developed a good working relationship with the insurance companies. Always ask for a pre-authorization or pre-certification prior to scheduling your procedure. Most insurance companies consider the treatment of spider veins to be cosmetic.

11 Who treats these conditions?

A wide variety of medical practitioners can perform vein treatments. Nurses or medical assistants may even be tasked with performing treatments such as sclerotherapy at some vein clinics. Vein treatment procedures should be performed by a physician if possible. While most vein experts are well trained, some doctors have limited experience, or treat a wide variety of conditions with only a small portion of their practice devoted to vein care. Board certified cardiovascular physicians are your assurance of the highest level of experience and expertise.

12 How do I choose someone to treat my vein problem?



As with any medical procedure, this is an important decision. The likelihood of a pleasant experience and the best possible outcome is dependent on finding the best qualified doctor to treat your veins. Select a practice that specializes in vein care and employs board certified vascular physicians. Make sure that your treatment will actually be done by the physician, and not another member of the clinical staff. You’ll want an experienced doctor who keeps up with the latest innovations and uses the best technology available. Look for advanced degrees, years in the field, research performed, etc. Choosing a physician who is a surgeon is ideal since you will have access to all possible treatments.



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About VeinSolutions

VeinSolutions, established by **Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgeons (CTVS)** in August 2003, brings together a group of experienced and specialized board-certified cardiothoracic and vascular surgeons dedicated to using the latest technologies in the diagnosis and treatment of varicose veins and spider veins of the legs and face. The concept is simple: to combine aesthetics and medicine in the comprehensive care of cosmetic and therapeutic vein problems.

VeinSolutions is a division of CTVS, a leading physician group serving Central Texas for over 50 years. CTVS provides state-of-the-art diagnostic services and surgical procedures on the heart, lungs, chest, and major blood vessels. **A team of more than 20 board-certified cardiothoracic and vascular surgeons care for patients of all ages throughout Texas from clinics in Hays County to the Central Austin office and clinics in Williamson County.** Our surgeons have privileges at all area hospitals. The CTVS goal is to provide patients with the finest in medical care and to restore them as quickly as possible to good health.

VeinSolutions utilizes the latest venous duplex imaging technology at its Vascular Lab.

VeinSolutions encourages you to be a cyber-skeptic when researching medical information on the web. Quackery and unsubstantiated claims are everywhere. We refer you to the following [article](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/evaluatinghealthinformation.html) from the National Institutes of Health for tips on how to evaluate the quality of medical information on the web: www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/evaluatinghealthinformation.html.