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The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: [patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk) if you would like a reference list.

Author: Ruth Boyes  
Role: Vascular Nurse Practitioner  
Date written: June 2013  
Last revised: April 2017  
Review date: April 2020  
Version: 1.1  
Code: PI1108

# **Ultrasound guided foam sclerotherapy for varicose veins** (page 1 of 2)

Please read this information along with advice from your doctor or nurse.

This procedure is used in selected cases and you will be advised by your surgeon if your veins are suitable for this treatment, which is often used in combination with other treatments.

NHS funding for varicose vein treatment is only available in certain circumstances such as if there is a leg ulcer, venous skin changes, venous eczema, bleeding from a varicose vein or other significant symptoms, causing severe functional impairment.

## **The procedure**

You may have to wait a short time for your appointment. This sometimes happens when people on the list have treatment that takes longer than anticipated. After the treatment you will have to stay in the department for 20 - 30 minutes.

The foam to be injected is a chemical which is mixed with air. When it is injected into the affected vein it causes inflammation and the vein blocks off. If a large vein is to be injected, local anaesthetic can be used to numb the area. Ultrasound is used to guide the injections.

## **After the procedure**

When the injections are complete compression is applied, either with a bandage or hosiery. For the treatment to be successful it is important to use the compression for at least a week after the treatment.

After treatment it is important to keep active and walk to reduce the risk of deep vein thrombosis (DVT).

Please arrange for a friend or relative to take you home after treatment.

## **Possible complications**

- deep vein thrombosis
- stroke and mini stroke (in a study of 1025 cases, 1 patient had a mini stroke and recovered after half an hour)
- thrombophlebitis
- allergic reaction to the foam
- visual disturbances (for a short period)

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**Tel. 01722 429210**

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- chest discomfort immediately after the treatment
- severe headache
- recurrence of the veins
- skin discolouration over the treated area. This tends to fade but may be permanent.

A hard lump may develop at the injection site and persist for some time. Some bruising is inevitable but this will also resolve.

To reduce the risk of suffering a DVT you should avoid flying or travelling for more than an hour at a time for 4 weeks after treatment.

If you experience severe phlebitis (this is a common feature of treatment), you can take anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen. It can take 4 - 6 weeks for the treated veins to shrink away.

### **Additional information**

Further information can be obtained from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) website [www.nice](http://www.nice.org.uk) or use this link to take you straight to the page <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/IPG440/PublicInfo/pdf/English>