

4 Ways to combat ugly spider veins



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KEEP SPIDER VEINS AWAY

Spider and varicose veins affect women and men of all ages, at approximately a 20-to-1 female-to-male ratio.

When a woman develops spider veins, it is most often due to genetics, as the hereditary condition is passed along from generation to generation. If a woman is genetically predisposed, the veins will develop due to her inherited weak vein walls or valves.

There are other contributing or accelerating factors though, including pregnancy, female hormone replacements and birth control pills, lack of exercise and obesity. However, even those predisposed to the venous disorder can take preventive measures.

1 Avoid birth control or hormone replacement therapy

First, avoid birth control pills or hormone replacement therapy. If you have already developed spider or varicose veins, it is important to visit your local vein specialist to see what your options are. If you are already pregnant, wait six to eight weeks after delivery to visit a vein specialist before looking into treatment.

2 Exercise regularly

Exercise is a crucial activity for promoting good venous circulation. Sitting or standing still for too long during the day is a direct cause of poor venous circulation and problem vein formation. Moving around gets blood pumping through the legs, preventing it from pooling in the veins. It's also important to exercise the muscles of the calf and foot. These muscles make up the "second heart," which is a system of muscles, veins and valves in the calf and foot that work together to push deoxygenated blood back up to the heart and lungs. Running, swimming and bicycling are all great ways to strengthen these muscles. While lounging or resting, it is beneficial to elevate feet on a pillow or ledge so they are 6 inches above the heart. This allows weak veins and tired legs to rest and will prevent putting pressure on the veins.

3 Eat fiber and avoid saturated fat

It's important to eat a diet high in fiber and low in saturated fat. This is because constipation can cause poor circulation and also puts pressure on the veins in the lower part of the body. The pressure may cause them to swell, and over a long period, results in varicose veins. It's also important to maintain a healthy weight, as obesity can strain the circulatory system. Try to eat foods rich in vitamin A, C and E. Vitamin A opens up blood vessels, which in turn helps oxygenated blood travel throughout the body and back up the legs. Both vitamin E and C keep blood vessels strong and help prevent them from stretching.

4 Invest in compression stockings

Graduated compression stockings can delay the development of varicose/spider veins as well. The graduated stockings act like an extra layer of muscle and help strengthen the foot and calf muscles while improving venous circulation. They can be purchased at medical supply stores and come in various colors, lengths and compression strength.

* NOTE

Even if all of the above guidelines are followed, some women cannot escape the hereditary trait of weak vein walls. If varicose or spider veins form, there are some easy treatment options for removal. Sclerotherapy is the most common; it's a painless injection treatment that collapses the vein, and the vein then reabsorbs the blood to reroute it to a healthy vein. The treatment is completely painless and works best on spider veins and small varicose veins. There are different types of sclerotherapy, including laser-assisted sclerotherapy, foam sclerotherapy and ultrasound-guided sclerotherapy. For large, deep veins, a more advanced laser procedure known as an endovenous laser ablation is used.