

# Make Varicose Veins Go Away the Dr. Oz Way, But Beware of Hidden Dangers

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2012-11-27 12:21



Dr. Oz reveals to viewers the latest technology for painless, nonsurgical treatment of varicose veins. However, what is not revealed are some hidden dangers that you need to know.

"It's the body gripe over 60% of women complain about - varicose veins," says Dr. Oz as he introduces special guest [Dr. Luis Navarro, MD, FACS and founder of the Vein Treatment Center](#) who says that he has a new, non-surgical way to remove varicose veins with cryo-sclerotherapy.

Varicose veins are a dreaded cosmetic blight for many women as well as for some men. The physiology of varicose veins and its smaller form of spider veins has to do with poor blood flow as deoxygenated blood makes its way from the lower extremities back to the heart.

For blood to travel back toward the heart, the venous pathway relies on the elasticity of the veins as well as the muscle contractions in the legs to act as pumps to work the blood up against the pull of gravity. Furthermore, tiny valves in the veins of legs act as one-way gates that prevent venous blood from flowing backward.

Unfortunately however, sometimes the venous blood does not circulate as well as it should up the legs and/or the valves become leaky allowing blood to flow backward and form into pools. These pools are evidenced by large, gnarly dark-blue veins that are known commonly as varicose veins.

While varicose veins are little more than unsightly blemishes for most, for others they can be achy to the point of being painful and a sign that an underlying medical condition may exist in need of medical care.

## Signs and symptoms of painful varicose veins include:

- An achy feeling in your legs.
- A feeling of heaviness in your legs.
- Burning, throbbing, muscle cramping and swelling in the lower legs.
- Sitting or standing for a long time worsens the leg pain.
- Itchiness around the veins.
- Skin ulcers near the ankles.

When skin ulcers form on or near the ankles, it may be due to a long-term buildup of blood from varicose veins. More critical, however, is the formation of blood clots deeper within the legs that causes severe swelling referred to as thrombophlebitis that may become dislodged and travel to the heart or brain and thereby block an important blood vessel. Such signs related to varicose veins require immediate medical attention.

The causes of varicose veins are varied, but typically are due to aging, family history, gender, obesity, standing or sitting for prolonged periods, and pregnancy—all of which can impede venous blood flow from the lower limbs back to the heart.

## To prevent or slow down the development of varicose veins, the Mayo Clinic offers the following recommendations:

- **Exercise.** Get your legs moving. Walking is a great way to encourage blood circulation in your legs. Your doctor can recommend an appropriate activity level for you.
- **Watch your weight,** and your diet. Shedding excess pounds takes unnecessary pressure off your veins. What you eat can help, too. Follow a low-salt diet to prevent swelling caused from water retention.
- **Watch what you wear.** Avoid high heels. Low-heeled shoes work calf muscles more, which is better for your veins. Don't wear tight clothes around your waist, legs or groin. Tight panty-leg girdles, for instance, can cut off blood flow.
- **Elevate your legs.** To improve the circulation in your legs, take several short breaks daily to elevate your legs above the level of your heart. For example, lie down with your legs resting on three or four pillows.
- **Avoid long periods of sitting or standing.** Make a point of changing your position frequently to encourage blood flow. Try to move around at least every 30 minutes or so.
- **Don't sit with your legs crossed.** Some doctors believe this position can increase circulation problems.

However, if in spite of doing all of the above and varicose veins do develop or persist, and you wish to be rid of them, cosmetic specialists such as Dr. Oz's special guest [Dr. Luis Navarro offers a range of sclerotherapy techniques to make varicose veins go away.](#)

Sclerotherapy (also known as "injection therapy") is basically a moderately invasive technique where a chemical solution is injected into the veins and capillaries of the affected blood vessels. The solution injected is a sclerosing agent that irritates the walls of the veins, which then causes the veins to collapse. Once collapsed, the injected veins scar and are resorbed by the body, leaving behind little to no evidence of the varicose vein. Blood circulation that had previously flowed through the vein is rerouted to healthier veins.

One of the cons of sclerotherapy is the discomfort of the procedure that has been likened to the sensation of multiple pinpricks or mosquito bites. To alleviate this discomfort, Dr. Navarro has developed a type of sclerotherapy called "cryo-sclerotherapy" where the skin is cooled and numbed at the injection site during the sclerotherapy treatment.

"With cryo, what we do is numb the skin to make it painless," says Dr. Navarro as he explains to viewers that ice-cold blasts of air as low as -20 degrees Celsius are applied to the injection sites before inserting the sclerosing agent into the affected veins.

"It's painless—you don't feel anything," states one viewer who allowed [Dr. Navarro](#) to treat her varicose veins live onstage on The Dr. Oz Show as a demonstration of the procedure.

The live demonstration was very effective as viewers could actually see varicose veins disappear one at a time immediately with each injection. [Dr. Navarro](#) states that the cost of his procedure is \$500 for 40 such injections.

However, little is said about the injections other than that it is "a detergent" solution that is being injected into the veins. A little online research reveals that there are a number of different injectable sclerosing agents used in sclerotherapy such as Polidocanol, Sodium Tetradecyl Sulfate (STS), Glycerine, Hypertonic Dextrose, and Hypertonic Saline—some of which are made into a foam-like consistency to be used for larger varicose veins.

While the sclerosing agents are generally safe to use, there have been warnings by the FDA that Sotradecol® (sodium tetradecyl sulfate injection) is contraindicated in patients with a number of medical conditions and that an allergic reaction resulting in anaphylaxis can result with this formulation in some patients.

Another sclerosing agent Asclera® (polidocanol) is also contraindicated for patients with a known allergy to polidocanol and in patients with acute thromboembolic diseases. Sloughing off of tissue and nerve damage could occur in some cases.

The take home message is that while sclerotherapy techniques such as cyro-sclerotherapy can be effective toward making varicose veins go away, a thorough discussion with your primary care physician in coordination with a cosmetic surgeon/specialist for treating varicose veins must be made to ensure your safety. The simplicity of the technique runs the risk of unlicensed and/or poorly monitored discount cosmetic services that could put your life at risk.

For more information by Dr. Oz on health and beauty, follow this link to an informative article titled "[Dr. Oz Scours Pinterest to Create Ultimate Girl's Guide for Beauty and More.](#)"

Image Source: Courtesy of [MorgueFile](#)

References:

The Dr. Oz Show—"[Banish Varicose Veins](#)"