

Home > Style > Hair & Beauty > Hairs the Scoop > Expert Advice: Unsightly Veins



Expert Advice: Unsightly Veins

WED., MAR. 31, 2010 ,5:06 PM EDT



Ethan Miller/Getty Images

Envy the smooth, seemingly vein-free limbs of stars like **Beyonce, Heidi and Gisele**? Well, there's no reason you can't achieve the same squiggle-free finish in time to rock the season's short shorts and miniskirts— it's just about who you know. And all the editors, publicists and experts we know swear by **Dr. Luis Navarro**.

An acclaimed surgeon and founder of The Vein Treatment Center in NYC, Dr. Navarro has been one of Hollywood's most-beloved specialists for over 25 years, both for his extraordinary talent and ironclad discretion. Below, the doctor outlines everything from the causes of varicose and spider veins, to preventive care and the latest in treatment options:

What are the primary differences between varicose and spider veins?

Spider veins are tiny dilated capillaries medically referred to as telangiectases, are blue, red or purplish in color and crop up in clusters resembling a spider web. varicose veins are larger abnormally stretched veins (rope-like appearance) that bulge on the surface of the skin due to pooling of blood caused by weakening of the valves in the vein walls.

What causes them? Are they hereditary?

Varicose veins are caused by heredity, hormones, weight fluctuations, prolonged periods of standing. Varicose veins forms because valves in the vein wall weaken due to the previously mentioned causes. These valves collapse, which causes the blood to pool, thus stretching the veins and causing it to bulge.

The tendency to have varicose and spider veins is inherited most often from the mother's side of the family. Other contributing factors are weight fluctuation, constipation, lack of exercise and prolonged periods of standing. Typically 40% of all American women will suffer from some form of vein disorder by age 50 and are twice as common in women as they are in men.

What are the best forms of treatment?

Sclerotherapy or "injection therapy" can successfully treat 90% of all varicose veins and nearly 100% of spider veins safely, effectively and painlessly— with excellent cosmetic results. The procedure is simple. A mild chemical solution is injected into the affected vein, causing the walls of the vein to become irritated and collapse. The vein is then absorbed in the body's natural healing process. The blood from the closed vein is rerouted to a healthy vein, thereby restoring proper circulation. Following the injections, the leg is wrapped with an elastic bandage for several hours. Over the next two to three weeks the treated veins begin to heal and disappear. Different solutions, concentrations, and techniques can be used for optimum results, depending upon the size of the damaged vein, the color of the patient's skin and the patient's healing potential. **The Vein Treatment Center** also utilizes a specialized technique known as foam sclerotherapy, in which the liquid sclerosing agent is converted to a foam-like substance, which is ideal for closing larger veins and can be visualized and controlled by ultrasound.

Ambulatory phlebectomy, another treatment option, is used for larger varicose veins. It's an in-office, minimally invasive surgical technique performed under local anesthesia. The area of the vein that is faulty is removed through minute incisions that heal leaving minimal scars. mini-phlebectomy makes it possible to surgically remove varicose veins, incompetent valves, and perforating veins in cases where sclerotherapy would be ineffective.

Endolaser, a treatment method created and developed at **The Vein Treatment Center** that uses laser energy to seal the affected vein. this procedure requires color duplex ultrasound imaging to guide a fine laser fiber, through a catheter (thin tube) in the vein, to the exact source of the venous problem. laser energy, converted to heat when inside the vein, seals the damaged area and closes the vein completely. This procedure requires only a small nick in the skin, local anesthesia, and no hospital visit or stitches. the combined therapy approach was developed at **The Vein Treatment Center** in 1984 when I began to achieve maximum cosmetic and medical results by combing different treatment techniques (utilizing any or all of the above) at the same time.

Virtually no downtime at all. That's the beauty of the combined approach. At **The Vein Treatment Center**, we use the most advanced, minimally invasive techniques, with all procedure completed under local anesthesia only, allowing patients to walk out the office immediately following the procedure. Sclerotherapy treatments range from \$250 to \$500 and surgery ranges from \$3500 to \$5000.

Are the effects permanent?

New veins can become diseased up at any time, especially if one has a genetic pre-disposition to developing varicose or spider veins. Even when one diseased vein is removed, other new ones can crop up.

How can one keep their veins from looking worse?

Regular exercise, monitoring hormone intake (ie: birth control), elevating your legs, maintaining a healthy diet high in fiber and appropriate body weight, and wearing compression stockings are all helpful.