

Telangiectasia (Spider Veins or Thread Veins)

What are they?

Telangiectasia are similar to varicose veins but smaller in size and closer to the skin surface. They represent clusters of tiny blood vessels (venules) beneath the skin that have become dilated creating thread like red or purple lines, often with a web-like appearance, on the skin.

What causes Telangiectasia?

The exact causes of telangiectasia are not fully understood, but the majority of cases probably represent damage to the skin from chronic exposure to sunlight, hence their preponderance to occurring in areas of the body exposed to the sun e.g. legs and face.

Other recognised causes of telangiectasia include hormonal changes, natural process of ageing and venous hypertension; spider veins are often present in patients with varicose veins. (See varicose veins)

Should I be worried if I have developed Telangiectasia?

No, the vast majority of telangiectasia represent benign skin changes that cause cosmetic upset as opposed to a serious threat to health. Very rarely telangiectasia may be a sign of an occult or known serious illness e.g. liver disease, systemic lupus erythematosus.

Where indicated your Circulation Clinic surgeon will investigate for any underlying condition causing your telangiectasia prior to recommending a treatment.

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What are the symptoms associated with Telangiectasia?

The majority of telangiectasias rarely cause significant symptoms with the main concern being related to their cosmetic appearance.

When symptoms do occur, these are predominantly itchiness or an uncomfortable feeling in the surrounding skin. Where telangiectasia occurs in conjunction with varicose veins, the symptoms of varicose veins may also occur. (See varicose veins)

What are the treatments for Telangiectasia?

At the Circulation Clinic we base our treatment practices on the best available evidence from the medical academic literature in addition to our clinical experience. Microsclerotherapy and laser therapy are both used for the treatment of telangiectasia. However, recent clinical trials report microsclerotherapy to be less painful, associated with faster clearing of the telangiectasia, and similar if not better long-term outcomes when compared to laser therapy. Therefore, the Circulation Clinic offers microsclerotherapy as our gold standard treatment for telangiectasia. (See foam sclerotherapy website page for details of treatment)

Why should I attend the Circulation Clinic for my treatment?

At the Circulation Clinic we base our treatment practices on the best available evidence from the medical academic literature in addition to our considerable clinical experience. Each client is reviewed and treated by an expert vascular surgeon ensuring they receive the best in care and expertise.

We strongly recommend to any individual seeking treatment to ensure they are reviewed and treated by a qualified vascular surgeon who not only is experienced in treating telangiectasia and varicose veins, but also has the medical knowledge and experience to identify those clients in who further investigation is indicated to rule out any underlying serious medical condition.

How successful is the treatment?

The treatment outcomes for telangiectasia are often dependent on the extent of telangiectasia and individual client cosmetic aims. The majority of clients require 2-3 treatment sessions in order to achieve a satisfactory result. However, the volume of sclerosant agent that can be safely used during each session dictates the number of sessions required.

Unfortunately, any treatment for telangiectasia often represents a temporizing solution with recurrence common after 6 months; approximately 50% will recur, often to a lesser degree, within 6 months.