



Thread Veins

Thread veins are small, thread-like blood vessels, seen just underneath the skin, usually on the legs and face. They may be blue, purple or red and vary in their amount and areas effected in different people. Why people get thread veins is largely uncertain but they are seen sometimes in people who have varicose veins or have other members of their family affected. They can result in embarrassment to such an extent that sufferers will avoid swimming or wearing skirts.

Assessment of thread veins in our clinics will often involve a simple scan to make sure there are no underlying problems with the main veins of the leg. This is because treatment failure is much more likely in the presence of varicose veins.

Treatment of thread veins is by microsclerotherapy. This is a technique that involves using a tiny needle to inject a chemical called sclerosant. The sclerosant damages the thread vein so that it closes up and eventually disappears. Early on there is redness and some mild stinging before settling down. In order to encourage the thread vein to close we advise the use of a compression stocking for a few weeks after the injection. It often takes more than one injection to get rid of the thread veins. The injection can be repeated at six week intervals when necessary. Most people will return to normal activities the day after injections, but we would suggest avoiding heavy exercise for 2 weeks, to reduce the possibility of the veins re-opening

Some people have some brown staining of the skin afterwards (from small amounts of leaked blood), which can take up to a year to fade away. Rarely, people can be allergic to the injection or develop small ulcers where the injection leaks into the skin; this can result in a small, permanent scar.