

LASER VEIN THERAPY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q: What is Laser Vein Therapy?

Laser/Light therapy uses either a single beam of light or a broad spectrum of light to eliminate facial and leg "spider" veins and other vascular lesions. "Spider" veins are superficial telangiectasias, tiny capillary vessels that are red, blue or purple in color. Further, with the right combination of parameters, the Cutera CoolGlide 1064 nm wavelength is also suitable for more superficial telangiectasias and spider veins on both the face and legs, flat and tuberous vascular birthmarks Port Wine Stains, Cherry Angiomas, Venous Lakes, Rosacea, and Poikiloderma of Civatte. The majority of vascular lesions present as a cosmetic problem, however some have cardio-vascular implications. Laser/Light therapy can also be used to such as port-wine stains and cherry angiomas, hemangiomas and venous lakes.

Q: How does Laser Vein Therapy work?

The laser/light source uses intense light that is selectively absorbed by the color of the blood in the vein. The light heats the blood inside the vein and causes damage to the vein wall. The body then breaks down and absorbs the damaged vein causing the vein to fade. When healing is complete the vein is no longer visible. Laser/light sources involve no needles, injections or incisions. The technician uses different settings to target superficial to deeper veins, adjust to different size lesions and to treat patients with different skin types.

Q: Is the procedure painful?

The pulse or "flash" of light from the laser can feel like an intense pinprick or snap of a rubber band, but most people report the effect felt like a hot and tingling sensation that is well tolerated. Anesthesia is not required.

Q: Is the procedure safe?

Lasers have been in existence for more than thirty-five years and are used by a wide range of medical specialists. Side effects are minimal and are generally limited to a slight redness of the skin, which should not persist for more than a few hours. Serious complications are rare.

Q: Is the result permanent?

Most patients find that the majority of the treated veins have shown significant improvement within two to six weeks of treatment. However, your final results may not be apparent for several months. Over time, it is possible for new veins to appear, but these too can be removed with the Cutera CoolGlide. Periodic re-evaluations are encouraged so these areas may be treated before they become too large or too numerous. Successfully treated vessels and lesions should not recur.

Q: How many treatments are needed?

The number of treatments needed varies from client to client depending on the type, quantity and location of veins or lesions being treated. Some results are obtained after a single session, but additional sessions are generally required. There is often a clear correlation between the degree of clearance and the number of treatments received.

Before your first treatment a "test patch" may be done to assess your skin's response to the therapy. On average, facial "spider" veins typically respond quite readily to treatment. The vessel may initially disappear due to spasm. The vein may recur after a few hours or even after a few days and often times needs a repeat treatment to totally eliminate the vein.

Vascular birthmarks are more difficult to treat and usually require numerous treatments depending on the size and response to treatment. These lesions are typically denser.

Leg veins also require numerous treatments; these vessels are larger, deeper in the skin and have thicker vein walls. It is important to realize that the best results require patience. Your body will continue to heal areas treated for several months after you have completed your therapy. These areas will continue to fade slowly with subtle changes. Results are gradual and can take several months.

After your initial screening exam your technician will give you an estimate as to the number of treatments that may be required. This is based on the assessment, your history and expectations. You may end up needing fewer or more treatments than estimated. It is important to discuss your expected outcomes with your technician who will do everything possible to meet or exceed your expectations but your expectations should also be realistic.

Q: What is the cost of laser vein therapy?

Price will vary depending upon area of treatment and specific approach that will be used. Please refer to our menu of services for average costs. A consultation with a certified laser specialist is the best and only way to determine how many treatments will be required and cost of treatment.

Q: What are some alternatives to Laser Vein Treatment?

You may choose no therapy. Your existing varicose and "spider" veins may progress and new veins may form. You should be re-evaluated periodically to monitor your condition for changes. You may choose to only wear compression support hose (if this is an appropriate treatment for your problem). Compression hose promote venous blood return to the heart. If support hose are worn faithfully, symptoms such as aching, heaviness and tiredness are often alleviated. They also may help prevent the progression and formation of varicose and "spider" veins. Sclerotherapy, a saline-based injection may be appropriate to treat varicose and "spider" veins.

Q: What can I expect?

Initially you may experience mild and transient heating of the skin, which usually lasts for about a minute. You may experience mild discomfort that can last for a few hours. You may notice mild erythema (redness of the skin) and minimal local swelling. This resolves in several hours to one to two days. After the vein is damaged the body needs time to heal. There is no guarantee that treatment with the laser will be effective in every case.

Q: What are some common side effects?

Side effects are often minimal, but some common ones include:

PURPURA-is a dark discoloration on the skin, which looks like a blue/purple bruise. This is caused by blood leaking out of the vein during a treatment. Purpura typically disappears within two weeks. As the bruise fades there may be a rust-brown discoloration of the skin which then can take one to three months to fade away.

HYPERPIGMENTATION and HYPOPIGMENTATION-the area treated may heal with changed pigmentation or color, either darkening (hyper) or lightening (hypo). This occurs most often with people who have a darker skin color or when the area treated has been exposed to the sun too soon after treatment. It is very important to avoid direct sun exposure to the area treated post treatment. Pigmentation changes usually resolve in three to six months. Rarely is it permanent.

EXCESSIVE SWELLING-skin swelling may occur immediately after treatment especially with facial therapy. Frequent applications of a cold cloth or refrigerated Aloe Vera gel may be applied. The swelling is not harmful and usually resolves in three to five days. Mild swelling typically occurs and usually resolves in 24 hours.

Rare side effects include:

BURNING/BLISTERING-this occurs very rarely. If burning occurs apply Aloe Vera gel as needed for one to two days. If blistering occurs keep the area clean with soap and water, apply Neosporin or Bacitracin ointment daily and cover with a dry dressing. These can take 5 to 10 days to heal.

Q: What should I know to prepare for treatment?

SUN EXPOSURE-it is important to be without sun exposure before laser vein therapy. Sun tanning increases the concentration of melanin in the skin, which competes with the blood in the vein for the absorption of the light. This can cause unwanted side effects such as hyperpigmentation, burning or blistering. You should avoid sun tanning before each treatment, using sun block as needed. Do not use sunless tanning products or tan extenders for one week prior to treatment. If these products have been used, cleanse your skin with an exfoliate and mesh sponge daily for one week.

CLOTHING-if leg veins are being treated; bring a pair of loose comfortable shorts to wear during your treatment.

MAKE-UP-if your face is being treated; remove your make-up in preparation for your treatment. You can re-apply make-up immediately after the procedure.

TIME ALLOTMENT-a laser vein treatment may last approximately 15-30 minutes. Less time may be needed depending on the number of areas being treated. Please arrive 10-15 minutes early for your first treatment to allow time for photographs and to sign your consent forms. If you need to cancel or reschedule your treatment, please give the office advance notice.

PHOTOGRAPHS-photographs will be taken before each treatment to document progress and/or for the purpose of medical education, research, scientific publication or educational presentations.

MEDICATIONS-if you are taking medications that cause photosensitivity consult your physician before treatment. Aspirin products (Bufferin, Anacin etc.) and Ibuprofen products (Motrin, Advil, Alleve etc.) should be avoided ten days before and after treatments to avoid bruising. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is acceptable.

Q: What if I have more questions?

Contact Kimberley Korb, Nationally Certified Laser Technician to schedule a complimentary One-on-One Client Consultation. Kim@TCRHealingArts.com or 919-961-2775