



## Non-Invasive Treatment for Visible Veins BY DR ANUSHKA REDDY NOVEMBER 24, 2014

**Varicose veins and spider veins ... a couple of phrases that most woman (and increasingly men) are becoming more and more aware and self-conscious of. The good news is that they can be treated. Dr Anushka Reddy reports.**

Treatment of visible veins was for many years the realm of surgical intervention. In a few cases it is still the superior option, but at least you are now faced with treatment options that offer superb results, minimal downtime and only minor discomfort.

### What is a varicose or spider vein?

To better understand how to treat visible veins, we have to know what causes them. Visible veins can be caused by many factors: one of them being weakened valves within the vascular system. Weakened valves means that not all the blood in your body is in circulation, and this causes pooling in the valves – which ultimately leads to visible veins.

Spider veins are tiny veins close to the surface of the skin that have become visible from hormonal changes, damage (sun/physical) or injury – and in some cases valve damage too. Spider veins are most visible on the face.

When you say non-invasive visible vein therapy, I immediately think of three possible options. Each has their own distinct advantages – advantages and disadvantages – and of course their ideal indication. It is my best advice to speak to your doctor in depth about their choice of visible vein treatment.

### Sclerotherapy

Sclerotherapy is the oldest non-invasive treatment option on the market today. The treatment works by injecting a sclerosing agent directly into the visible vein. This agent collapses the vein, and it's this collapse that causes it to disappear.

Each vein may need to be injected two or three times, depending on the depth and size of the vein. In some cases, you may need to return for a follow up session to ensure the vein has completely disappeared. As you can imagine, the treatment requires a few injections, which can cause a little discomfort and some minor bruising.

Other than that, sclerotherapy is a popular and safe treatment option, even more so by the low cost of the treatment.

### OPL (Optimized Pulsed Light)

OPL is the upgrade to IPL (Intense Pulsed Light). OPL still uses pulsed light, but does so with more accuracy and power, allowing for faster treatment results with less discomfort.

The treatment works by targeting vascular lesions with haemoglobin specific wavelengths. The haemoglobin is what causes the vein to be visible – so it makes sense that if we destroy the haemoglobin cells, the vein will disappear. The haemoglobin absorbs the pulsed light as heat energy, and it's this heat energy that destroys the cells. The damaged cells are then absorbed by the body and eradicated, leaving you visibly vein free.

You may require a few treatment sessions to achieve your desired goals, but there is very little pain and almost zero social downtime using this approach. Therefore it's easy to see why this treatment option is growing in popularity.



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### ThermaVein

Possibly the latest technology on the market, for visible veins, **ThermaVein** is designed to specifically target facial spider veins or similar type thread veins. The technology at play here is called thermo-coagulation.

The machine is non invasive. It delivers a microwave pulse into the visible vein, where the heat energy closes the vein, blocking blood flow. This causes the visible vein to disappear. The treatment is very comfortable, but not completely painless – and you may require a few treatments to achieve your desired result. In many cases though, treatment results are immediate. An element I am impressed by is the safety features built into the treatment, i.e. the short automatic pulses make it impossible to burn or scar a patient.

Should you be considering undergoing a vein treatment to get your body, legs and face into beach mode, I then suggest you work with a trained doctor who understands how to treat your condition and skin type.

These are fantastic, safe and predictable options, but always make sure to chat to your doctor about possible risks and side effects.

With the right doctor, you can easily achieve your dream, blemish-free skin in time for the family holidays.

### ABOUT DR ANUSHKA REDDY

Dr Anushka Reddy MBChB – Dr Anushka Reddy is the owner of Medi-Sculpt and the President of the South African Association of Cosmetic Doctors (SAACD). She regularly contributes to various publications and has also appeared on TV programs such as Carte Blanche Medical, Top Billing, Eastern Mosaic, Maatband, CNBC Africa and Hello Doctor. Dr Reddy travels both locally and internationally to discover new techniques and products to fulfill her patients' aesthetic wishes.

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