



For Immediate Release

Spider Veins Don't Have to be Scary: Dr. Cindy Asbjornsen of the Vein Healthcare Center Offers Tips for Coping with Spider Veins

October 24, 2012 (South Portland, ME) – Telangiectasia is the technical term, but most people know them as "[spider veins](#)." The tiny red-, blue- or purple-colored veins occur just below the skin but are close enough to be seen on the surface. They may appear as short fine lines, clusters, or in a spider web shape.

According to Dr. Cindy Asbjornsen of the [Vein Healthcare Center in Maine](#), spider veins can be an indication of early stage venous disease; treating them not only can improve appearance, but can also help stop the progression of [venous disease](#) at its source.

"Vein health is a continuum, so while spider veins may appear minimal, there could be a larger vein 'leaking' underneath," said Dr. Asbjornsen.

Here are some tips for coping with spider veins:

- Elevate your legs above your heart as often as possible— for as long as 30 minutes or as briefly as three minutes. The ideal time is after you have been standing for a long period or after a hot shower.
- Sit properly. Focus on good posture and avoid crossing your legs, or sitting in ways that can compress veins for prolonged periods.
- Walk. Walking causes the rhythmic contraction of calf muscles and helps promote blood flow to the heart. Just 30 minutes every day— all at once, or in shorter increments.
- Contact a [board certified phlebologist](#) for an evaluation. In the past, treatment for spider veins has been considered merely cosmetic, but they can be the tip of the iceberg.

A basic understanding of how veins work can help one understand what causes disorders like spider veins. Veins carry blood from the legs and arms back to the heart. The blood in the legs travels up against gravity, so when the valves in the veins become damaged, blood "leaks" back into the legs and creates a "pooling" effect.

Effective treatment begins with a thorough evaluation from a qualified phlebologist who will look for the source of the problem: the leaky valve or valves. An ultrasound is the best way to accurately determine the problem. Then, the physician can recommend the appropriate procedure or therapy.

[Sclerotherapy](#) is frequently used to treat spider veins. In this procedure, small needles provide access to the vein so that a sclerosing agent can be injected into the vein's interior wall. This substance causes the vein to become sticky and seal shut, allowing it to disappear. Blood then finds a healthy path back to the heart.

With modern sclerosants, there is little risk of complication, and patients often experience an immediate relief of symptoms. Most patients can return to their regular activities after the procedure is over.

Sclerotherapy can be performed either with ultrasound guidance or light assistance. Both are safe and effective procedures that eliminate the need for the old-fashioned technique of surgically removing veins.

Dr. Cindy Asbjornsen is the founder of the Maine Phlebology Association and the Vein Healthcare Center in Maine. Dr. Asbjornsen is certified by the American Board of Phlebology and cares for all levels of venous disease, including spider veins, varicose veins and venous stasis ulcers. She is also the Editorial Director of Vein Health News, Maine's vein magazine for primary care physicians.

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