

Laser vein removal faq

1. Does laser vein removal hurt?
2. Who can be treated?
3. Why get it done?
4. What are the risks?
5. What results can i expect?
6. How many treatments will i need?
7. How fast do veins grow back (if they do)?
8. How much does it cost?
9. Compared to other methods of vein removal
10. How to prepare for treatment.
11. What happens at the initial consultation?
12. What happens on treatment day?
13. What are the post-treatment instructions?
14. Summary of pre-treatment & post-treatment instructions.
15. When should i follow up?
16. What are the causes of unwanted blood vessels?

1. Does laser vein removal hurt?

Treatment with the sciton profile™ laser has been commonly described as a small pinprick or like an elastic band snapping against the skin. The procedure is usually done with minimal discomfort. However, certain areas of the body may be more sensitive. Discomfort from the sciton profile™ laser is reduced by application of the cooling window on the skin before, during, and after the laser treatment. Additionally, the laser parameters can be quickly adjusted by the operator between laser pulses if they are causing too much discomfort.

Often people describe their first laser treatment as being the most uncomfortable with subsequent treatments being less of a discomfort. Likely there are more blood vessels to treat the first time round so that more energy is absorbed into the skin, causing more discomfort than in follow up sessions.

We usually suggest that you shave the area where the veins are to be treated. This is because hair has pigment that may absorb the energy that is meant to destroy the veins. It is a good idea to shave the day before or several hours before your treatment session because freshly shaved skin is often a bit more sensitive.

By applying the cooling window on the skin before, during, and after the laser treatment, discomfort is minimized. For sensitive areas, our staff may sometimes also apply cooling gel pads before or after treatment, in addition to the excellent cooling provided by the profile™ cooling window during treatment.

Some people will take 1 – 2 acetaminophen 325mg or 500mg (aka tylenol) about 2 hours prior to treatment. Alternatively, some people take 200 – 400mg ibuprofen (aka advil, motrin) 2 hours prior to treatment.

Women are often less sensitive after their menstrual periods have passed, so you might consider this when you are booking your appointment.

Emla™ cream has been occasionally used in very sensitive areas. Emla™ cream is a topical anaesthetic (freezing or numbing) available for purchase at laser away. It is applied 1 hour prior to the procedure over the target area. We remove all creams such as emla™ prior to treatment in order to get the best laser results.

Tips to reduce discomfort:

- Read the faqs ahead of time
- Have your questions answered prior to getting any laser treatments
- Shave the targeted area the night before or at least 2 hours prior to treatment
- Pamper yourself on the day of treatment – eat an adequate meal, get good sleep, drink plenty of fluids, plan a break or treat for yourself afterwards
- Take an acetaminophen or ibuprofen prior to treatment if you desire (optional)
- Use emla™ cream over the sensitive area 2 hours prior to treatment. Do this after you have discussed this option with our staff.
- Tell the laser operator if you are feeling any pain or excessive discomfort we want to do this “for you, not to you”

2. Who can be treated?

Almost anyone can be treated. Laser vein removal is an effective and gentle way to remove undesired veins.

In our experience, laser vein removal is one of the best treatments for removing unwanted veins on the upper body or face. However, any part of the body can be treated with the sciton profile™ laser to treat unwanted veins. The most common areas treated in women – face, upper body, legs, & thighs and for men – upper body & face.

The sciton profile™ laser can be used to treat people of all skin colours. Older lasers and shorter wavelength lasers were unable to treat darkly pigmented skin on people

without risking damage to the skin. However, the sciton profile™ laser has adjustable energy to allow treatment of all skin types.

Tanned skin can be treated. However, for the best results, we suggest that you do not tan, use sunless tanning products, or expose yourself excessively to the sun for the three weeks leading up to your laser vein treatment. Lighter coloured skin responds the best to laser energy.

If you have a new tan, have been exposed to the sun in the last three weeks, or have used a tanning product, please inform us before you laser. This allows us to adjust the treatment regimen accordingly to best laser your darker skin. If you've recently tanned, you may now require additional treatment sessions to achieve the optimal vein removal.

We may need to reschedule the treatment if you have had recent sun exposure.

Most blood vessels can be treated. Blood vessels that you can see with the naked eye respond very well to the sciton profile™ laser vein treatment. Cherry spots, broken blood vessels, and telangiectasia can all respond well to laser treatment.

Tiny vessels that are so small that they are difficult to see even with a magnifying glass may not be as easily treated. For these vessels, our broad band light (photofacial) treatment might be a better option. Larger vessels (greater than 3mm) may respond better to injection sclerotherapy than laser. Leg veins are also better treated with sclerotherapy in most cases.

Your consultation with our physician will allow us to evaluate your blood vessels and determine how or if the laser treatment will provide you benefit.

3. Why get it done?

If you are considering laser vein removal, you have already identified veins or blood vessel blemished on your body that you wish to have removed. You should choose to have laser vein removal done once you have considered the following:

- Laser vein removal may provide long-term blood vessel reduction.
- Is this what you desire?
- Laser vein removal can be done quickly and gently.
- Laser vein removal works for all skin colours on any area of the body
- Laser vein removal can be done in combination with sclerotherapy
- You should only have vein hair removal if you desire it!
- Like everything in life, you should make decisions because they are your decisions. If you are only making changes for somebody else, you may end up regretting it.

To what extent are you bothered by your veins? Cherry spots? Broken blood vessels?

Do your unwanted veins make you feel uncomfortable in social situations, at work or school, or in intimate situations?

4. What are the risks?

Usually minimal side effects. After you have had a laser vein treatment completed, you may experience short-term reddening and irritation (swelling) of the treated area. This usually lasts a couple hours but occasionally lasts for a few days.

Complications are uncommon. The sciton profile™ laser is less likely than older lasers to cause longer-term irritation, redness, blistering or pigmentation changes. Complications have been reported in less than 1% of treatments, but may include:

- Blistering or crusting over the treated area rarely occurs – but is well treated with a polysporin or aloe vera ointment and usually heals within a week.
- Bruising over treated area – especially when treating blood vessels on the legs that are a little larger (2-3 mm). This is not a major problem and will usually resolve within a couple weeks without any treatment.
- Chance of developing hypo- (lighter) or hyper-pigmentation (darker) in the treated area. Fortunately this occurs in less than 3% of treatments. This is infrequently a cosmetic problem and it usually resolves after several months.
- Occasionally you can develop a skin depression (like a shallow dip in the skin) over the treated area. These changes are temporary and resolve in 3 – 18 months.
- Atrophic scarring (a small scar with a skin depression) is also rare but can happen with any laser treatment
- There is no risk for skin cancer. The sciton profile™ laser does not cause skin cancer.

Effects on moles or freckles in the treatment area depends on the size and colour. For smaller freckles and moles, we usually do not need to take any special precautions. However, large and dark moles or freckles may absorb more of the laser light than the surrounding skin. For this reason, we may need to reduce the settings on the laser. Our doctors or experienced laser technician can make these adjustments as needed.

We prefer to avoid treatment of veins over tattoos because the pigments in the tattoo may absorb the laser light and cause fading of the tattoo, discomfort, or a burn.

5. What results can i expect?

Is laser vein removal permanent? There is no treatment for blood vessels which can guarantee permanent vein removal.

You have small blood vessels over your entire body, flowing just below the skin. As you age, have more sun exposure, and with some medical conditions, you can develop new blood vessel blemishes. What we remove today may come back in the future or you may develop new vein blemishes in the nearby area.

The best description of laser vein treatment is “long-term blood vessel reduction”. For most people, the total number of undesired blood vessels is greatly reduced after 1 – 4 treatments, depending on the area of the body. Blood vessels on the face are often improved with 1 – 2 treatments whereas blood vessels on the legs may take 1 – 4 treatments. After laser treatment(s), most people will likely have an improvement of 70-90%. It is important to know what to expect so that you are best satisfied with the level of improvement.

Lasers have been used for vein removal widely over the last 10 years so we cannot guarantee vein reduction in the next 10-20 years. We know that long-term vein reduction can be expected to last 2 years or longer but some of the people who had laser vein removal years ago still enjoy significant vein reduction.

At laser away, we usually treat face vessels with laser vein removal. For the leg veins, we often suggest sclerotherapy or sometimes a combined treatment of sclerotherapy and laser vein removal in order to achieve the best results.

6. How many treatments will i need?

This depends on how many veins you have, the size and resilience of the veins, and how well your body responds to the laser treatment. For some people, one treatment is enough while others may require several treatments.

The number of treatments needed depends on how many blood vessels you wish to get rid of, what area you are treating, and if there are any medical conditions contributing to the blood vessel growth.

Most blood vessels on the face respond in one or two treatments. The treatments can be done as soon as 2 – 6 weeks apart. Leg veins may typically require 2 – 6 treatments to get significant vein reduction. Leg vein treatments can be done every 3 – 6 weeks.

The time interval between treatments allows the body to heal and reabsorb the unwanted blood vessels that have been treated with the laser. Depending on your desired end result, the time also lets you evaluate how well you responded to the laser treatment. You may choose to have additional treatments, a touch-up appointment, treat other bothersome areas, or live happily with your reduction in undesired blood vessels.

A person may have as many laser treatments as they wish. There are no safety limits to this laser type. The sciton profile™ laser does not cause skin cancer.

Most people will likely have an improvement of 70- 90% after all their treatments. You should not expect to be completely “vein-free forever”. Laser vein treatment and sclerotherapy treat what we see today, but not what will appear tomorrow.

7. How fast do veins grow back (if they do)?

Regrowth of tiny blood vessels is very unpredictable. If you have a medical condition that may be causing your undesired blood vessels, then it would be important to be optimally treated to reduce the number of new blood vessels that appear. Unfortunately, you cannot stop the process of aging that sometimes brings new blood vessel blemishes. You can however, protect your skin from further sun damage that can cause some blood vessels to appear by wearing sunblock spf 45 – 60 and protective clothing.

We recommend support stockings (graded compression stockings) for the legs to reduce the growth of large varicose veins, but it doesn't usually curb the growth of the smallest blood vessels (less than 3mm) on the legs.

8. How much does it cost?

Fees for laser vein treatment are quite affordable. Cost of laser vein removal treatments may range from \$150 – 250 per session depending on the area being treated. We will evaluate the area you wish treated at your consultation and provide you with a quote upfront.

Fees are charged per treatment session, plus gst. Fees are paid at the time of treatment by visa, mastercard, cash, or interac. No cheques please.

Manitoba health does not pay for any laser vein treatments.

At laser away, your consultation is free. No physician referral is required.

Call us. Our trained staff would be happy to answer any questions you might have regarding laser vein removal. Our knowledgeable staff have all experienced sciton profile tm laser vein removal or hair removal themselves and so they speak from experience.

9. Compared to other methods of vein removal

The major advantages of laser vein removal are:

- Quick, gentle vein removal that has long lasting results
- Treats the smallest of blood vessels
- Less bruising risk than vein treatment by sclerotherapy
- No bandaging afterwards
- Minimal to no downtime after treatments
- Works on any area of the body
- No needles

Sclerotherapy is the preferred treatment for larger blood vessels in the legs. Blood vessels larger than 3mm in diameter will respond better to injection sclerotherapy than laser treatment. See our education section on sclerotherapy for more information.

Often people have both larger and small blood vessels that are both near the skin surface and in the deeper tissues. There can often be a role for both laser and sclerotherapy to remove unwanted blood vessels.

10. How to prepare for treatment.

Get the best benefit by preparing ahead of time. Everyone wants to get the maximum benefit for the least cost. In laser vein treatment this translates into removing the most unsightly blood vessels for the longest time with the fewest number of treatment sessions.

To begin it is important to know that for the majority of people, laser vein removal works very well and may reduce the number of undesired veins by 70 – 90% after your required treatment sessions. We cannot guarantee permanent vein removal.

To get the most veins destroyed in one laser session, you should follow the pre-treatment and post-treatment instructions and review the information below.

Shave on the day before treatment or on the morning before treatment – skin tends to be more sensitive for a couple hours after you shave, so it is not a good idea to shave immediately prior to the procedure. Hair is often pigmented and can absorb laser energy that is meant for the vein treatment. This wastes some of the laser energy and you may not get the full laser treatment that you want on the unwanted vein. Extra hair on the skin surface may also increase the chance of causing a skin burn.

Avoid tanning – the sciton profile™ nd:yag 1064 nm laser can effectively treat all skin types and can be adjusted if you have tanned to a different skin colour. However, the most effective laser treatment occurs in people with lightly coloured skin.

This means that we can still do laser vein treatment on tanned people but if you want to get the most bang for your buck, avoid tanning (artificial or real) for 2 weeks prior to

your laser vein treatment session. Tanning lotions and creams artificially colour your skin and this has the same effects with the laser as does a real tan.

If you do have a recent tan or have recently been in the sun, please inform us when you come in for your laser session so we can adjust the laser to get the best results or properly advise you as to post-treatment care.

We advise that you do not tan for a 1-2 weeks after laser treatment to reduce the chance that your tan may come out uneven. We recommend sunscreen with an spf of 45-60 directly after laser treatments.

Do not wear makeup over the area to be treated – makeup needs to be removed prior to treatment. Makeup may cover up vessels that we wish to treat. Some makeup can absorb some of the laser energy, thus wasting the energy that is meant to treat the underlying vein. Makeup could heat up from the laser and irritate or burn the skin.

Makeup can be reapplied right after treatment with the sciton profile™ laser.

Pre-treatment for discomfort – most people who have laser vein treatments describe the treatment as gentle and at worst, like a snapping rubber band on the skin. Some people will take 1 – 2 acetaminophen 325mg or 500mg (aka tylenol) about 2 hours prior to treatment. Alternatively, some people take 200 – 400mg ibuprofen (aka advil, motrin) 2 hours prior to treatment.

Many women will find that their skin is more sensitive around the menstrual period. Timing laser treatments so that they don't fall on menses may be important for some women.

Timing between treatments – treatments for the face can be done 2-4 weeks apart. Treatments on the legs and other areas of the body are usually timed 4-6 weeks apart. This allows us to properly evaluate the treated site and for the patient to evaluate their response.

Keeping us informed – please inform us if you have any new medications, new medical diagnoses, become pregnant, or have a new tan since your last laser treatment. This will allow us to advise you appropriately and ensure that you get the most effective laser vein treatment.

11. What happens at the initial consultation?

Your initial consultation appointment is with one of our physicians and/or our laser technicians who will review the procedure with you and answer any questions you may have about the laser treatment or sclerotherapy. Our physicians will review your

relevant medical history and briefly examine the veins that you wish to have removed to determine the best treatment for you.

In some cases, you may be first seen by the nurse/technician who are very knowledgeable and can usually answer any questions you may have, but we still believe the initial physician consultation is integral and valuable, so you would also be seen by the physician. While most clinics charge for an initial consultation with their physician, we have chosen to waive the fee for this physician consultation.

A photo of the proposed treatment area may be taken prior to treatment and kept within your private patient file. This allows us to follow treatment changes over time and assess improvement.

If you have booked your initial consultation and your laser treatment for the same day, please shave the planned treatment area ahead of time.

12. What happens on treatment day?

There is no standard preparation for the laser treatment. You may eat or drink whatever you like prior to your appointment. Alcohol should be avoided prior to treatment because it can dilate your vessels unnecessarily.

Please shave or clip the area a couple hours before or the day before your treatment. Recently shaved skin can be more sensitive.

Please do not wear any makeup when you come in for the treatment. Makeup can absorb some of the laser energy and can reduce the effectiveness of hair removal or can lead to skin surface discomfort or burns. If you have to wear makeup, wear a water-based makeup that can be easily removed prior to treatment. For your convenience we have a large bathroom mirror where your makeup can be reapplied immediately following the laser treatment.

Upon your arrival, you will check in with our front desk to inform them you are here. Our laser technician will then take you to our treatment room where you may change (if applicable) or get prepared for treatment (lay on treatment chair). You will be given a pair of protective goggles to protect your eyes from the laser. Every person in the laser treatment room, including the patient must wear the appropriate protective eyewear.

Prior to every procedure, we review any changes to your health status and how your last treatment went. You will be given a written informed consent to review and sign. A photo may be taken of your treatment area and kept in your private patient file.

Your procedure may range from lasting a few minutes to an hour depending on the area to be treated. Generally, smaller areas take less time than larger areas. The usual treatment time is less than 30 minutes.

If you wish to have additional areas treated when you come in, please call us ahead of time so that we can ensure that there is enough time.

Once you are comfortably seated or lying on the treatment chair, we will apply a thin layer of clear gel to the skin. Next, our laser operator will apply the cooling glass window of the laser to pre-cool your skin surface. A small test area may be done to ensure you get the best and most effective laser vein treatment. The cooling glass window may be applied to your skin before, during, and after your laser treatment pulses. The laser treatment pulses occur rapidly and gently to destroy unwanted veins. The technician then moves the laser onto the next section of skin to continue the treatment.

The treatment room has not been designed for spectators so our policy is to not have spectators in the room while the laser is operation.

13. What are the post-treatment instructions?

After your treatment we suggest the following post treatment skin care:

You may apply a gentle moisturizer or aloe vera gel/cream to the area to prevent drying or crusting but this is not essential.

If you get crusting or scabbing in the treatment area, please do not pick at it as this can make scarring more likely. Let the crust fall off on its own. You may apply polysporin or aloe vera cream over any blisters or cracks in the skin following laser treatment.

Contact our office if there are any signs of infection in the treatment area (red, tenderness, or pus).

Do not shave the treated area for 2 – 3 days after treatment.

If you are washing the treated area, please pat dry to avoid irritating the recently treated veins (vigorous rubbing or drying can irritate the treated area). Do not use any abrasive skin cleansers or scrubs during this time.

If you blister in the treatment area, you should be careful with makeup application as the area may be sensitive.

The redness from the treatment generally fades within hours to few days. The skin may also seem dryer over the treatment area so a gentle moisturizing cream may be applied.

The treated blood vessels may initially seem darker for a couple weeks following laser treatment. This fades as the blood vessels are reabsorbed by the body. Some bruising can sometimes occur as well but is also expected to resolve within a couple weeks without treatment.

14. summary of pre-treatment & post-treatment instructions.

Pre-treatment instructions

- Avoid sun exposure, tanning beds, or tanning creams or lotions for 2-3 weeks prior to treatment and throughout the treatment sessions.
- Shave the treatment area 24 hours prior to laser treatment.
- Avoid heavy makeup application or use water-based makeup prior to treatment.
- Pamper yourself on laser treatment day, have a good meal or snack ahead of time.
- Do not come in rushed, hungry, thirsty, or stressed out. Laser vein removal should make you feel better – not worse about yourself.

Post-treatment instructions

- You may apply an ointment or aloe vera to the area to prevent drying or crusting but this is not essential.
- If you get crusting/scabbing in the treatment area, please do not pick at it as this can make scarring more likely. Let the crust fall off on its own.
- If you have any blistering or cracks in the skin following laser treatment, you may apply an antibiotic ointment (purchased over-the-counter).
- Contact our office if there are any signs of infection in the treatment area (red, tenderness, pus). 204-253-2929
- Do not shave the treated area for 2 – 3 days after treatment.
- If you are washing the treated area, please pat dry to avoid irritating the treated skin area.
- If you blister in the treatment area, you should be careful with makeup application as the area may be sensitive.
- Avoid hot tubs or very hot baths for 1-2 days following the treatment as this can cause the treated veins to dilate and refill with blood – exactly what we do not want.
- Avoid tanning after laser treatment for 2-3 weeks to prevent an uneven tan.
- If you have had vessels treated around the nose, please avoid blowing your nose if you are able for at least 2 days afterwards. The delicately closed vessels may pop back open with forceful blowing.

15. when should i follow up?

After the initial treatment, we would like to see you in 2 – 6 weeks to evaluate the treatment site and ensure that we have chosen the right laser parameter to give you the best and most effective results.

16. What are the causes of unwanted blood vessels?

Spider veins

Spider veins are a descriptive term that refers to a small blood vessel found near the surface of the skin, which looks a bit like a spider. There will be a small central spot with smaller blood vessels radiating out like spokes from the centre (or like legs on the body of a spider). If you press down and let go over the spot you will notice that the blood first drains out and then refills from the centre spot.

Sometimes doctors also refer to spider veins as spider angiomas or star telangiectasia. Spider veins are actually a type of telangiectasia (see below), which is basically a dilated blood vessel in the surface skin area.

Spider veins can occur for absolutely no reason at all. It may be quite normal for someone to have several spider veins with no medical reason for this. Spider veins can also appear in response to a variety of factors. The presence of certain diseases, hormones, and physical stress can cause spider veins. Chronic sun exposure, physical or surgical trauma, pregnancy, corticosteroid use, alcohol, and taking estrogen pills can cause spider veins.

Spider veins respond well to sciton profile™ laser vein removal or injection sclerotherapy.

Telangiectasia

Telangiectasia (te-lan-jee-ek-taa-zsha) is the medical term for the dilated small blood vessels that are seen just below the surface of the skin. They can be pink, red, purplish, or blue. They can vary in size.

Several types of telangiectasia exist, including simple linear vessels, spider veins, and popular veins (round).

Telangiectasia often are found on the face and measure less than 1.0mm in size. They are also common on the legs, but usually look like spider veins. However, they can be found on any area of the body.

Telangiectasia can appear for any of the same reasons that spider veins appear (physical stress, hormones, medications). Some diseases that cause telangiectasia

include acne rosacea, scleroderma, lupus, or specific telangiectasia forming diseases (e.g., ataxia-telangiectasia or hereditary hemorrhagic telangiectasia).

Rosacea

Acne rosacea is a disease that affects the face of both men and women. It usually starts as redness, almost like blushing over the cheeks, nose, and chin. This may lead to pimples and acne like cysts over the same area, thickening of the skin over the nose, and small blood vessels (telangiectasia). Women more commonly get the blushing redness, and men tend to get the thickened enlarged nose (called rhinophyma). Rosacea usually occurs to people between the ages of 30 – 60.

Unfortunately, we are unsure of what the exact cause is. There are some topical antibiotic treatments that can help lessen the redness (eg., metronidazole cream/gel).

People with acne rosacea often complain of facial flushing and redness. Telangiectasias are often present and don't usually respond well to topical treatments or pills.

The sciton profile™ laser vein treatment is a very good option for treating current and future telangiectasias related to rosacea. Often the redness associated with rosacea can also be improved. Another option for rosacea that we offer is to have broad band light (bbl) photorejuvenation treatments. This light-based treatment also quite effective in treating the flush of rosacea.

Other tips to improve your rosacea include watching out for things that might make it flare up or worsen. Typically, sun exposure, alcohol, stress, spicy foods, hot drinks, cold or hot weather, and strenuous exercise can make your rosacea worse.

Cherry spots

A cherry spot may also be called a cherry angioma or a “campbell de morgan’s spot” by doctors. The cherry spot is basically a small blood vessel complex that is concentrated in one spot. They often appear like little red bumps on the skin. They occur in up to 50% of all adults and more appear as you age. Most times they are found on the chest, back, and limbs.

Cherry spots don't usually cause any symptoms and do not go on to grow into cancer.

Sometimes, people taking hormone medications or women who are pregnant may develop more cherry spots.

Most cherry spots respond well to treatment with the sciton profile™ laser. They may require 1 – 4 treatments.