

**Mr Andrew Gordon MS FRCS
The Bridge Clinic
Oldfield Lodge
Bridge Road
Maidenhead
Berks
SL6 8DG**

**Telephone 01628 780200
Email: ag@andrewcgordon.co.uk**

**Varicose veins
Ultrasound-guided foam sclerotherapy
Information Sheet**

What is ultrasound-guided foam sclerotherapy?

Ultrasound-guided foam sclerotherapy is a procedure used to seal off varicose veins. Varicose veins are a common disorder in which veins in the leg become enlarged, twisted and are visible beneath the skin's surface. A sclerosant (chemical) is mixed into a foam and injected into the affected vein. This causes the vein to collapse and the vein fades within a few weeks. Ultrasound is the use of high-energy sound waves to help locate the affected veins. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has published information for patients. This is available from their website (address below) or by telephoning 0845 003 7781.

<http://guidance.nice.org.uk/IPG314/publicinfo/pdf/English>

What does this procedure involve?

This procedure can be carried out in a treatment room. A small needle is inserted in the affected vein and is monitored using ultrasound imaging. The foam is then instilled into the vein and the needle removed.

What are the benefits of this procedure?

This procedure can remove the appearance of varicose veins and help relieve heaviness, aching, throbbing, itching and cramps or fatigue of the leg.

What would happen if my veins were left untreated?

The appearance and discomfort of varicose veins may stay the same or they may get worse over time. Untreated varicose veins can sometimes lead to itching, cramps and heaviness of the legs, skin discoloration, red inflamed areas and skin ulceration.

What are the risks?

Some patients experience short-term side effects. These include:

- Bruising
- Tingling and numbness around the site
- Lumpiness around the injection site
- Skin discoloration
- Headaches, migraine and temporary problems with vision

Other rare side effects include:

- Inflammation of veins
- Blood clots (thrombosis)
- Allergy
- Chest tightness, dry cough

Are there any alternatives?

Compression hosiery may improve symptoms. If symptoms persist, other alternatives may include ablation (removal of veins using laser or radio frequency ablation) or surgery (stripping and ligation of the veins).

How long will I be in hospital?

This is a minor procedure and will take up to 20 minutes.

What happens before the procedure?

You can eat and drink normally. Please wear loose clothing and flat shoes, as you will be wearing tight compression stockings after the procedure.

What happens after the procedure?

Compression stockings will be applied to the treated legs. Before your discharge, the nurse will advise you about post procedure care and a follow-up appointment will be arranged for you.

What activities will I be able to do afterwards?

There are no restrictions.

How much pain can I expect?

Slight discomfort may be experienced over the first day or so. Paracetamol tablets may be taken six hourly if required.

How do I care for my wound?

The compression stockings will normally be kept on for three days. **You will not be able to have a shower or bath while the stockings are on.** No further treatment is needed for the injection sites.

When will I be able to drive?

You can drive as soon as you feel comfortable to do so.

When can I return to work?

Generally there are no restrictions. You can resume work as soon as you feel ready to do so.

When should I seek help?

- If you develop a fever above 101°F (38.5°C) or chills.
- Increased pain, redness or swelling.
- Severe bleeding.

Where should I seek advice or help?

Please contact either the Hospital or my Secretary on the above number.