

TREATMENT of FACIAL THREAD VEINS

We use either a Pulsed Dye Cynergy Laser or an Intense Pulsed Light source to treat facial thread veins. These are also used to treat Port Wine Stains, Rosacea and Scleroderma. Other treatment options include micro-sclerotherapy and the KTP laser.

WHAT IS INVOLVED?

The light is of the correct colour to be selectively absorbed by the red colour of the veins. As the light is absorbed it is turned into heat, damaging the thread veins this encourages the body to absorb them. The flashes of light feel like being zapped by an elastic band. If necessary a numbing cream can be used one hour before. Spider veins may only need a few flashes, but Port Wine Stains will need many. The treatment will probably need to be repeated. Immediately afterwards the skin will be bruised with some surrounding redness and swelling. The bruises go a deep purple colour. The treated area will feel warm for a while afterwards. It is unusual for blisters to form, but some crusts or scabs may form. These appearances last a week or two. There is more experience with the pulse dye laser but the Intense Pulse Light leaves less bruising.

Usually a few test shots will be done first. This is to assess the correct power level. If the results are good then at your next visit larger areas can be treated. Broken veins generally need two or three treatments, with eight weeks between them.

We are all sensitive to what other people think of us and sometimes learning how to cope with this can be more useful than laser treatment. Please ask the doctor for more details.

WHAT ARE THE UNWANTED EFFECTS?

Scarring is a potential problem but is unusual. If it does occur it is usually in the form of some change in texture of the skin, which may return to normal in time. Some individuals are prone to thick keloid scars and they are at increased risk.

Darker skin types contain pigment that blocks the light treatment, increasing the risk of skin damage and making the treatment less effective. The light treatment may damage the brown pigment in the skin and leave a white mark. Never have treatment when you have a tan. A light brown stain may remain after the bruising has cleared. This can take months to fade.

If you are taking anticoagulant tablets such as *Warfarin* extra care is needed, make sure the doctor knows. Light treatment can bring out cold sores, if you have ever had these please let the doctor know.

These powerful light sources are much brighter than sun light and can damage eyes, so everyone in the laser room must wear protective goggles. The fewer people in the laser room during treatment the better.

SOME ADVICE ON CARING FOR THE TREATED AREA

- A sun tan gets in the way of the laser light so *avoid the sun*, and use a strong sun block , SPF 30, before and during the course of treatment. Keep the area to be treated as pale as possible.
- Try to wait 2 or 3 days before applying any makeup. Apply gently by dabbing, avoid rubbing, and once applied leave the makeup on rather than remove it. Be *gentle* with the treated area until it has settled down so as to minimise the risk of scars. It should not need a dressing as long as you can resist picking and scratching.
- If the redness persists for more than a couple of days, is getting worse, and especially if accompanied by crusting or weeping contact the clinic to get it checked.