

Treatment of Varicose Veins

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Telangiectasias (spider veins, web veins, dilated venules) are permanently dilated blood vessels that create fine, red lesions or lines with radiating limbs on the skin. They are usually limited to the dermis.

Varicose veins are large, superficial veins that have become twisted and swollen and are usually found on the lower limb. Varicosities are usually caused by incompetence of the valvular system within the vein. In severe cases they may cause severe pain and swelling of the extremity.

Sclerotherapy and/or surgical interventions for varicose veins less than 2mm are considered cosmetic and are not a covered benefit.

The PA Nurse may approve sclerotherapy or surgical interventions treating saphenous varicosities when ALL of the following conditions are met:

1. Adequate venous capacity in deep veins indicated by Duplex Doppler ultrasonography unless there is evidence of recurrent ulceration.
2. Pain and functional impairment directly related to the varicosity unrelieved by 6 months of conservative medical management (including rest, analgesics, appropriately fitted compression hose that can achieve compression pressures of 30-40mm Hg)
3. One of the following complications of venous stasis: superficial ulceration, spontaneous hemorrhage or recurring phlebitis.

Sclerotherapy and/or surgical interventions are contraindicated when any of the following are present:

- Diabetes
- Difficulty with ambulation
- History of deep venous thrombosis, thrombophlebitis or pulmonary embolism
- Pregnancy

The following procedures for the treatment of symptomatic varicose veins are considered investigational/experimental and are not covered:

- Non-compressive sclerotherapy
- Echosclerotherapy
- Intense pulsed-light source (photothermal sclerosis)
- Transdermal laser therapy
- Transilluminated powered phlebectomy

References:

1. See attached 'Up To Date' and 'Cigna Healthcare Coverage Position' for literature review.

Approved by: Clinical and Service Quality Improvement Committee (CSQIC) **Date:** 4/13/06

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