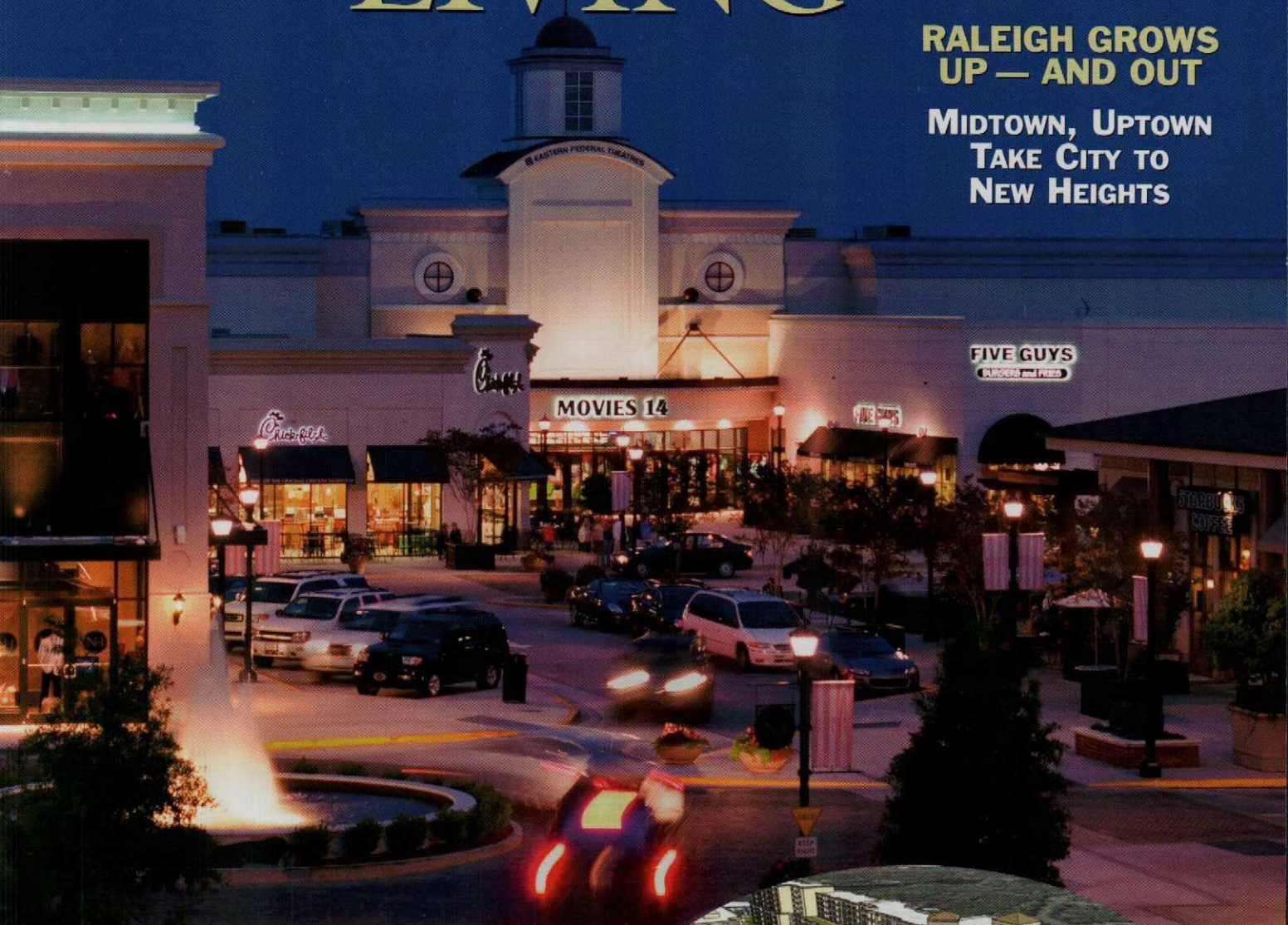


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Sclerotherapy: Is it right for you?

A Q&A with Eileen M. Slutsky, RN, BSN

Q: How do patients know if sclerotherapy or laser therapy is the right option?

A: The gold standard for vein therapy is sclerotherapy, but many need or like to have a combination treatments, depending upon individual vein patterns. Each patient must be evaluated individually.

Q: Is the treatment safe?

A: Absolutely. The veins that are injected are only a fraction of overall circulation, and we use only U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved solution.

Q: Can only tiny spider veins be treated, even though I have larger bluish-type veins?

A: It is extremely important to treat in a particular order: Large, medium, then small vessels. Treating veins in this order will produce lasting results.

Q: Are the results of sclerotherapy permanent?

A: Yes. If a vein has been injected properly, then it will not reappear. Unfortunately, hereditary tendencies exist, and new veins can develop. Periodic follow-up visits are recommended to keep legs looking and feeling great.

Q: What happens if bypass heart surgery is needed in the future?

A: The veins used in bypass surgery include the greater saphenous and lesser saphenous of the leg, which are not injected as part of sclerotherapy. If those veins are diseased and a surgical procedure is necessary, then they would not be a viable graft for bypass surgery.

Q: Is it necessary to stay in bed with feet elevated for a period of time?

A: No. In fact, patients should walk at

least 20 minutes twice per day to help with the healing process and allow the circulatory system to find a new healthy pathway to the heart.

Q: Is it mandatory to wear compression hose?

A: Compression after sclerotherapy helps heal the veins, promotes good venous blood flow and prevents complications. Typically, patients who wear them as directed — between three and 14 days, depending upon severity — see faster clearing and less bruising, and legs feel better throughout the healing process.

Q: How often are treatments?

A: Treatments are spaced between four and eight weeks apart to allow for healing time.

Q: How much of an area is covered with one treatment?

A: Both legs, front and back, can be treated at one time.

Q: How long after treatment will a difference become evident?

A: Immediately afterward, some bruising or mosquito bite-type welts can arise. But after approximately two weeks, there should be a visible yet gradual fading of veins. From two weeks to three months, the area should clear entirely.

Q: Can spider veins that ache and cause legs to feel heavy and tired be injected or lasered?

A: Yes. The heaviness comes from broken valves that are not pumping blood to the heart. By eliminating this type of cluster of veins, legs can look and feel better.

Eileen M. Slutsky, RN, BSN, is owner of Aesthetic By Eileen, part of Davis Plastic Surgery, in Raleigh. She can be reached at (919) 785-1220 or eileen@aestheticsbyeileen.com.



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