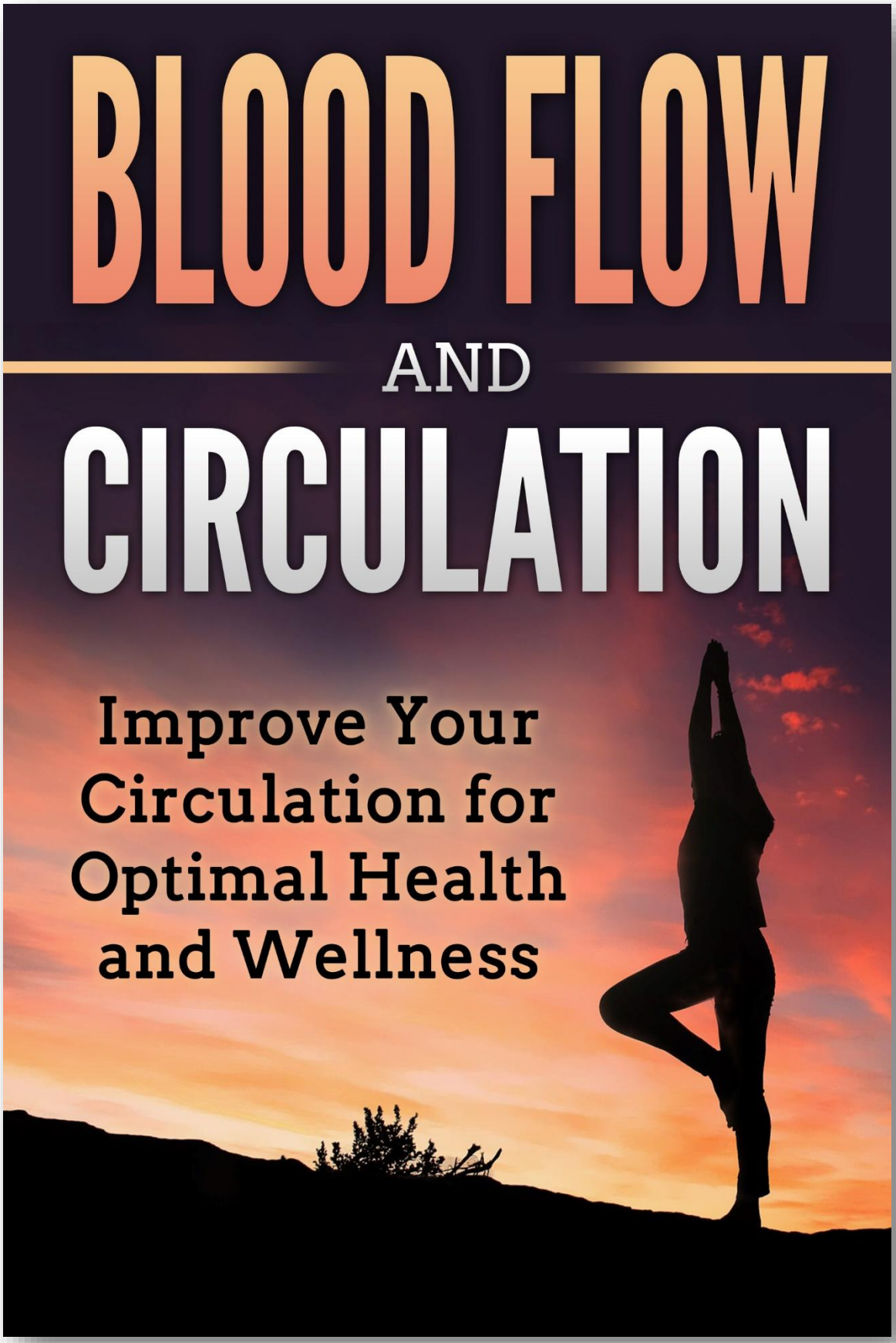
BLOOD FLOW AND CIRCULATION

Improve Your Circulation for Optimal Health and Wellness



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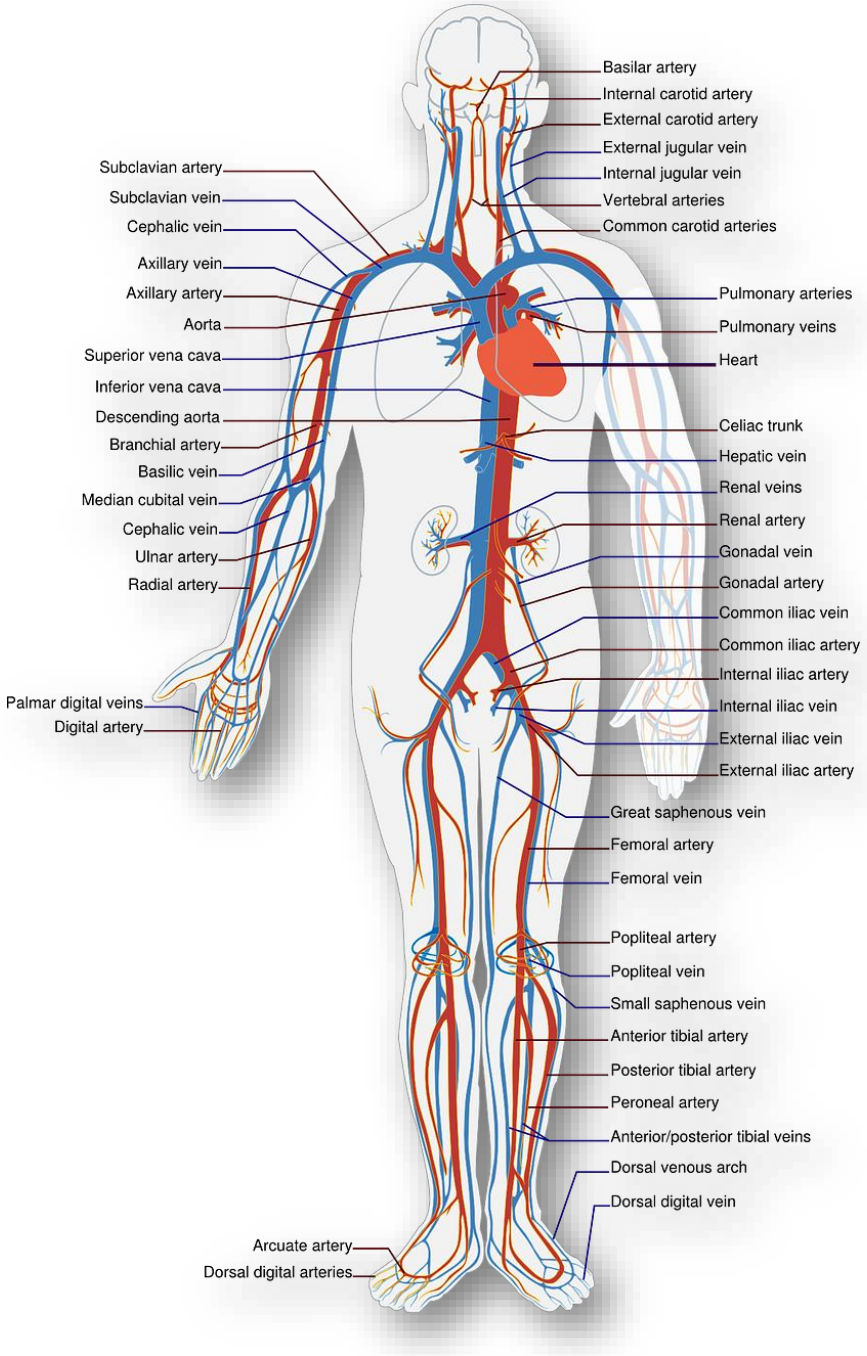

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Introduction

While all the body's parts and systems have a part to play, and all are important in their own way, none is more critical than our circulatory system. Also known as the cardiovascular system, this extremely complex structure is absolutely essential to our existence.

If it stops, we stop. When any of the blood vessels that are part of our circulatory system are compromised, our health suffers, in many different ways.

Damage to blood vessels can occur from external damage, resulting in cuts and bruises, which can range from minor to fatal. We can take steps to minimize this, by being careful to avoid physical damage.

Most people do this fairly well, however most of the damage that occurs to their cardiovascular system occurs unnoticed, incrementally, due to actions that can be a lack of self-care, and is often self-abuse.

In the main, people living in modern western societies do not take the best of care of their circulatory systems. There is a very common tendency to pass this responsibility on to health care providers, often after much damage has been done through neglect.

This eBook outlines how the damage can occur, the consequences, and steps we can take as individuals to prevent and overcome some of this damage using natural methods readily available.

Factors that Contribute to Poor Blood Circulation

Circulation problems can be experienced by men, women and children. The task of sending blood, nutrients and oxygen to all parts of the body is carried out by our circulation system, and a reduced blood flow to any area of the body means that the cardiovascular system isn't working as it should be.

The body's circulatory system is not only responsible for transporting nutrients and oxygen to the cells. It also plays a role in transferring away the carbon dioxide and wastes that need to be excreted from the body.

Therefore, if the cardiovascular system is not functioning at full capacity, the health of the whole body is affected.

Circulation problems usually present themselves in the extremities, particularly in the arms and hands, and legs and feet. Poor circulation is not a disease but rather a symptom, or a result of another health problem, such as diabetes, obesity, arterial problems or heart disease.

If left untreated, it can lead to a lifetime of disability or discomfort.

Lifestyle Factors That Contribute to Poor Blood Circulation

There are many lifestyle factors that can affect healthy blood circulation, including the following:

1. **Lack of Exercise**

Lack of physical activity is a huge contributor to circulation problems. If a person must sit or stand for long periods of time most days of the week, the blood in the legs and pelvis area can become stagnant, due to the poor blood circulation.

If nothing is done to rectify the poor blood flow, it may eventually lead to blood clots. This is the reason why airline passengers who are traveling for long hours

are advised to get up, move about, drink lots of water and avoid wearing tight fitting garments. They will also be asked to perform some leg and body stretches to allow better blood circulation.

2. **Smoking**

Cigarettes contain chemicals such as carbon monoxide and nicotine that is harmful to the circulatory system. Nicotine is not only addictive, it can have adverse effects on the arteries.

As a stimulant, nicotine can speed up the heart rate resulting in increased blood pressure. As a vasoconstrictor, all the arteries become smaller, thus making it

harder for the heart to pump oxygen-rich blood throughout the body. To overcome the effects of nicotine in the body, the heart has to work harder.

Unfortunately, the need to work harder means an increased need for oxygen to be able to sustain the additional effort required for the heart to make. However, the carbon monoxide from the cigarette poisons the oxygen content in the blood and this is when the dangerous cycle of bad circulation starts.

3. **Alcohol**

Health experts have confirmed that alcohol binge drinking can have negative impacts on blood flow and circulation, as it impairs the functioning of the circulatory system.

There has been plenty of scientific findings to show that alcohol harms the proper functioning of the smooth muscle and endothelium cells, which play a role in the regulation of healthy blood flow throughout the body.

These harmful effects of alcohol cause the development, and/or the progression of artery problems, such as atherosclerosis while also increasing the risk of other cardiovascular diseases.

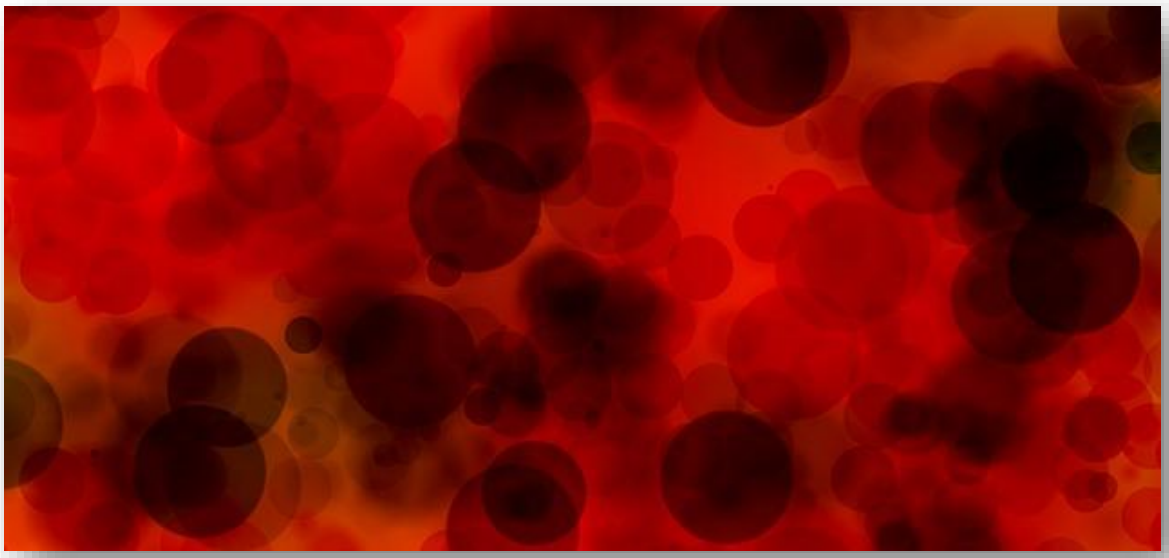
4. **Stress and Anger**

Chronic exposure to high levels of stress, which in turn may contribute to negative emotions such as anger, can contribute to poor circulation.

Too much stress can cause muscle tightness, quite often felt in the neck and shoulders. This tightness can make you want to scream! This tightness, or muscle knots, disrupts the proper flow of blood to the brain, heart and other vital organs of the body.

To prevent stress from causing poor blood circulation, finding ways to manage and reduce stress is important.

Health Conditions that Lead to Poor Blood Circulation



There are also health problems that may contribute to an unhealthy circulatory system, which includes the following:

1. **Varicose Veins Can Lead to Poor Circulation**

Varicose veins are usually caused by walking or standing for long periods of time and can cause poor circulation when the veins become dilated resulting in an abnormal flow of blood. People with varicose veins often complain about having tired and aching limbs due to the poor circulation.

The valves of healthy veins prevent the blood from becoming stuck or from flowing backwards, and these valves open and close to ensure that the blood flows through the limbs and moves in one direction.

However, with varicose veins the valves become weak or deformed thereby allowing the blood to flow abnormally and accumulate in one area. This is what gives the vein a swollen, bulging appearance and contributes to poor blood circulation.

2. Peripheral Artery Disease

Peripheral Artery Disease occurs when the arteries which deliver blood to the legs, feet and arms become stiff and narrowed. This hardening of the arteries is usually noticed first in the legs and feet, due to the poor circulation of the blood.

The arteries start to lose their elasticity as they become narrowed and hardened due to the accumulation of calcium deposits on the walls of the arteries.

Eventually these arteries may close completely thereby blocking the flow of blood which will then lead to tissue and nerve damage, or injury. When these arteries fail to supply blood as they should, the person will experience tingling, numbness and pain.

This condition is associated with other medical problems such as diabetes mellitus, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Cigarette smokers are also at a higher risk of having PAD.

3. Raynaud's Disease

Raynaud's disease (also known as Raynaud's phenomenon) is where the smaller arteries or blood vessels tighten or become over-sensitive in a response to hot or cold temperatures. For example, if it is freezing cold, the supply of blood to the extremities is drastically reduced, and poor circulation results.

Raynaud's disease causes poor circulation in the legs during the night. Severe stress can also trigger the development of this disease. It is characterized by spontaneous spasms that occur in the blood vessels which results in poor blood flow.

This condition is usually characterized by skin discoloration in a person's fingers, toes and sometimes the nose. This discoloration is caused by an abnormal spasm happening in the blood vessels leading to a reduced supply of blood to the local tissues.

4. **Deep Vein Thrombosis DVT**

When blood clots occur in the veins, a condition called Deep Vein Thrombosis develops. This condition causes swelling and pain in the legs, and can be life-threatening if the blood clots become loose. These clots can cause a serious blockage of a healthy blood flow.

If this plaque lodges inside your lungs, pulmonary embolism can take place. People who have had surgery or are bedridden and unable to move for an extended period of time have an increased risk of developing this condition.

Symptoms of Poor Blood Circulation

Poor blood circulation is often referred to by many health experts as the silent killer. Unfortunately, many people have circulation problems, but they don't realize the potential health problems associated with it. You shouldn't really joke about the fact that you often have cold hands or feet!

Here are a few signs that you could have poor circulation:

Swollen Feet

Swollen feet are often caused by poor kidney function. When there is poor blood circulation, fats tend to build up in the renal arteries resulting in a pool of blood in the person's legs.

This is why people who suffer with swollen feet are advised to position their legs in an elevated manner. Make sure the legs are positioned higher than the level of your heart. This will facilitate improved circulation so that any swelling in the lower legs will subside. If you have elevated your legs, but there are no improvements, consult your physician to determine the real cause.

Cold Extremities

This is the most common symptom of poor circulation - having cold hands and feet. Proper blood circulation is crucial for maintaining and regulating overall body temperature. So, if a person complains of cold extremities when the weather indicates otherwise, they most likely have a circulation problem.

Numbness or Weakness In The Arms and Legs

Some people who experience poor circulation complain of numbness or weakness in their arms and legs. This can be when they are active or at rest. If these symptoms occur suddenly, and the person also shows speech problems and drooping facial muscles, it may mean there is low blood circulation to the brain.

These symptoms are commonly experienced by people who have atherosclerosis. Immediate medical help must be sought, in case it is a stroke.

Skin Discoloration

Skin discoloration is another tell-tale sign of having circulation problems. This condition is referred to as cyanosis. Changes in skin color are seen in the person's arms, legs, hands or feet. The toes and fingers will appear to have bluish tints. The skin may also look shiny but the extremities look bluish and often pale, due to a lack of oxygen and blood circulating to those areas.

Constipation

Poor circulation also causes all the other systems in the body to slow down and the digestive system is not exempted from this. If the digestive system slows down due to poor blood circulation then the person will very likely experience constipation.

If left untreated, this can develop into a gastrointestinal disorder.

Loss of Appetite

Having a healthy appetite means there is a healthy blood flow to the liver. However, if the body's circulatory system is unhealthy, a loss of appetite and weight loss may occur. This is why if a person experiences a persistent lack of appetite for no obvious reason, a doctor's consult is recommended to rule out any health issues.

Fatigue and Muscle Cramps

Poor circulation makes it difficult for the body to work at all! Poor circulation leads to less oxygen and nutrients travelling to all parts of the body, including the muscles. This results in fatigue and muscle cramping.

Circulation Problems - Cold Hands and Feet

Many women experience freezing cold hands and icy cold feet due to poor blood circulation. Of course, many will tell you that their cold hands mean they have a warm heart!

The Estrogen Connection

Some studies suggest that estrogen levels are responsible for cold hands and feet in women. This may be one of the main reasons that women typically suffer from this problem more commonly than their male counterparts.

Women in their early 30's and 40's can suffer the effects of "Estrogen Dominance" when their body has a much higher level of estrogen than progesterone as they approach and enter perimenopause.

Cold hands and feet are one of the symptoms of Estrogen Dominance; however, this may also be indicative of a thyroid issue. Make an appointment with your family doctor and request a blood test for hormone levels.

This will show you what your Thyroid and Estrogen levels are up to, among other things, and be a good starting point for determining treatment.

Raynaud's Disease

Raynaud's Disease is an immune disorder also known as Raynaud's Syndrome and Raynaud's Phenomenon. It is characterized by an exaggerated constrictive response to cold. Approximately 60%-90% of sufferers are women.

If your hands and feet, (or fingers, toes and nose) become blotchy and white in appearance, feel numb and/or give way to a bluish color and swelling, it is vital to check in with your doctor.

This is especially important if you particularly find you're consistently flaring up when exposed to cold weather or when handling frozen foods.

Typically, patients are frequently chilly when others are not. Of course, the worst time for spasmodic contraction of small veins and arteries is during the winter. Studies show that this ailment is higher among those who suffer from migraines.

Left untreated, this condition may eventually damage blood vessel walls and cause even more serious issues, such as gangrene.

Natural Help for Raynaud's Disease

There are things you can do to help with Raynaud's disease. They are:

- Reduce coffee and tea intake, avoid iced drinks, milk and red meat.
- Take 2 tablespoons of virgin olive oil every day.

- Avoid immersing hands in freezing cold water.
- Wear gloves during cold weather.
- Eat green vegetables and salad daily with cider vinegar dressing.
- Increased calcium intake through the colder seasons improves blood flow by ensuring vasodilation, and helping the tissues to relax.

Although cold hands and feet are not uncommon, they can be a problem where your partner is concerned! Trying to put your icicle feet against your partners warm legs or wrapping your icy cold fingers around their body, could leave some partners rather annoyed.

Therefore, you may find stimulating your circulation with the following herbs a great way to rectify this issue.

Herbal Blood Circulation Stimulants

- **Cayenne Pepper**

Cayenne Pepper is an invaluable remedy for those who suffer from cold hands and feet. Start out slowly and gradually increase as your tolerance builds up.

Either sprinkle some on your meals or make a hot drink. Add a dash or two of cayenne pepper, lemon juice and honey. You can purchase capsules or make your own from the pure herb and empty gelatin capsules.

Be sure to take capsules with food, as some people find this spice can cause an upset tummy if taken on an empty stomach.

If you experience a ‘‘burning ring of fire’’ during your bowel movement, simply reduce the amount you are ingesting and take with yogurt or acidophilus the next time.

You can even sprinkle a bit into your socks or gloves and let the warming take effect externally.

- **Ginger and Cinnamon**

Ginger Root is another warming herb that you can easily pick up from your local grocery or natural foods store.

Thinly slice some ginger root and make a homemade cup of tea. You can add cinnamon, honey and lemon juice for a delicious hot toddy.

Candied ginger is a great option for keeping in your purse, at your desk or in your car, for those times when you need a quick bit of ginger to get the blood circulation happening. It's also perfect for the times when you don't have time to make a hot drink for yourself.

Tips to Improve Poor Blood Circulation in the Legs

If you have poor blood circulation in your legs it's important that you find ways to improve it. You need your blood to flow and circulate all around your body, so it can carry oxygen-rich blood and nutrients.

Some of the tell-tale signs and symptoms of having poor blood circulation in the legs include:

- Frequent cramping, tingling and numbness in the legs.
- Leg swelling, leg ulcers and painful calves.
- Having cold feet most of the time.
- Wounds, cuts, scratches and sores taking a lot of time to heal.

If you have any of these symptoms, it is a good idea to consult with your doctor. However, keep in mind that taking prescription drugs is not always the only answer and the following tips may prove helpful in improving your body's blood circulation.

- *Walking*

Narrowed or hardened arteries leads to poor circulation in the legs and feet, and in severe cases, the simple a simple act of walking can cause pain. This is because the tissues of the feet and legs are not receiving enough nutrients and oxygen.

However, this should not stop you from walking. Moderate physical activity is crucial in preventing the increased development of plaque in the arteries while also reducing the risk of blood clot formation.

If you find it difficult to walk, opt for simple exercises that suit your situation. For example, if you are traveling, or having to sit for long periods of time at your desk, it is good to try exercises that allow your calves and feet to be moved and stretched. This is necessary to ensure a healthy blood flow to your legs and feet.

As your feet and leg muscles contract, the blood in your veins is being pushed and pumped. Your muscles function as a pump that help force the blood to be pumped up and around your body.

Tips to Improve Blood Circulation in the Legs at Night

Frequently experiencing leg jumps or cramps, tingling or numbness in the legs at night, may be signs that you have poor blood circulation. To help overcome this, take these steps to improve your sleeping condition for better blood flow.

Check your pillows and mattress to see you are giving your spine the correct support it needs.

Sleeping on your side will help reduce the pressure of your major veins while they perform their function of carrying blood to your heart and then around your body.

Propping a pillow between your legs will also improve blood flow.

- *Stop Smoking*

Smoking promotes atherosclerosis. The chemicals inhaled from cigarette smoke directly affects the walls of the blood vessels. This leads to the narrowing of the blood vessels thereby decreasing the amount of blood flow. Secondhand smoke also has the same negative effects on the body's blood circulation.

Therefore, don’t smoke and don’t allow others to affect your own health!

- *Stretch Regularly*

Stretching your legs after taking a warm bath is an excellent way of improving blood circulation to your legs. Your muscles are warm and the blood flows easily.

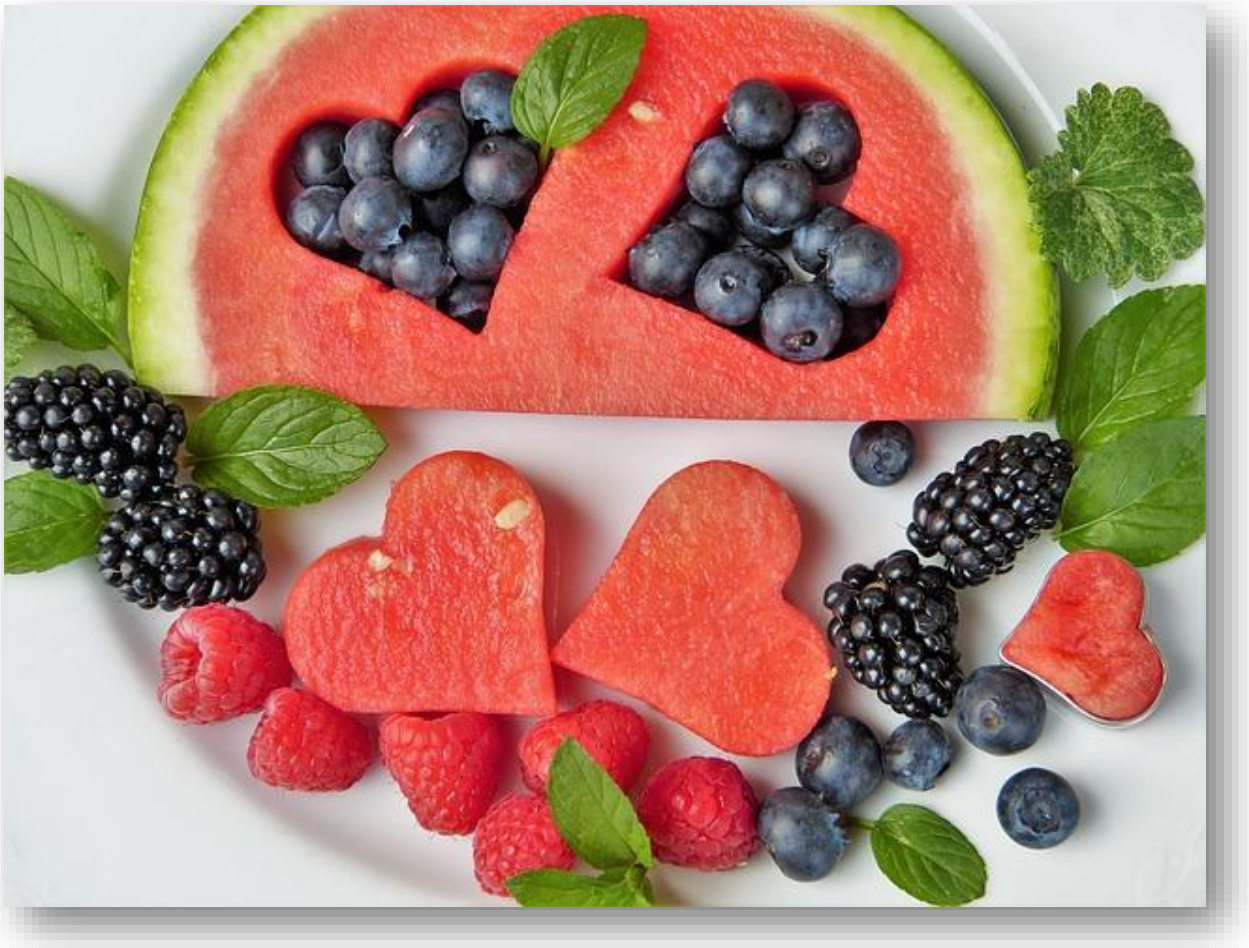
It is also advisable to wash your feet with cold water every day. The cold water makes your body respond to the cold and send blood as quickly as possible to

your toes! Alternating warm and cold water soaks has helped many who suffer with circulatory issues.

- *Eat Heart-Healthy Foods*

To help your heart to pump blood all the way to your feet and around your entire circulatory system it pays to eat heart-healthy foods.

Foods such as blackberries, oranges, nuts, watermelons, dark chocolate, salmon, herring and cayenne pepper are wonderful additions to improve blood circulation.



Lifestyle Tips for Improving Blood Circulation

The body's circulatory system is responsible for delivering nutrients, wastes and gases, to and from the cells. It also plays a role in regulating body temperature and in maintaining the pH level of the body.

Without the blood circulating to all parts of the body, we wouldn't survive. The heart serves as the vital pump which keeps the blood and oxygen flowing to all our organs. If circulation is impaired in any way, our entire system is compromised.

Therefore, we have to do everything we can to keep our circulation functioning at the highest level! Below are some helpful tips to improve your cardiovascular system and keep it functioning at its best.

Exercise Daily

You do not have to do strenuous physical sports or lift weights in order to boost your circulation. All that is required is to take a daily walk. Exercise is a great way to boost circulation to cold hands and feet, ease aching muscles and help fight fatigue, that is often brought on by the accumulation of lactic acid in the muscles.

Quit Smoking

Smoking restricts the flow of blood and does a lot of damage to your body and health. That's not news. We all know that. However, as you just read, a healthy blood flow is important if you want to survive. Smoking does not lead you to the desired result required!

Smoking contributes to the hardening of the arteries and the clogging and narrowing of the arteries. How can the blood circulate and flow optimally if this happens?

Stretching Exercises

Another simple exercise is to stretch. Stretching can improve your circulation. Performing stretching exercises every hour or so is easy and important, especially if you are slumped and cramped over a desk all day.

It doesn't matter what type of stretching exercises you do, just stretch enough to get the blood circulating from the tip of your head to your fingers and toes.

You may perform some arm circling exercises, touching your toes and any activity that allows your whole body to be stretched. What matters most is that you do not allow your body to be in the same position for several hours.

So, stand up and reach for the stars!

Relax to Keep Your Stress Hormones Under Control

Most people say they are stressed. However, too much stress and pressure can make your stress hormones become continually elevated.

Prolonged exposure to stress can wreak havoc on your circulation and the best remedy is relaxation. Indulging in relaxing activities does not have to be costly. You can easily take a leisurely stroll (which is good for your circulation) and listen to the birds, or put on your headphones and listen to some relaxing music.

Relaxing but mildly exertive physical activities such as these are perfect for dissipating stress hormones. It is imperative for health that the body has a stress-free recovery period every day.

Massage

A good massage boosts circulation and has been used for this purpose for centuries. The Greeks used the therapy of massage regularly, as they believed it to be an indispensable part of achieving optimal health.

It is an effective method of lowering blood pressure, improving bodily functions and for speeding up the healing process.

If you want to prevent your body fluids from pooling down to your toes and other parts of the body, which can be seen for example when the feet swell, treat yourself to a relaxing massage. The pressure placed on the body in every massage stroke facilitates better circulation, as the blood begins to move more freely.

Aspirin for Blood Circulation and Natural Aspirin Alternatives

Aspirin remains popular for helping improve blood circulation and heart health, and there are many scientific studies which show that aspirin helps prevent heart attack and stroke.

How Does It Help?

Aspirin helps to prevent blood clots occurring on the surface of ruptured plaque. These atherosclerotic plaques can form along the blood vessel linings and this is usually caused by high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and/or high blood sugar levels.

When platelets start to stick to the ruptured plaque, blood clot formation also begins. In turn, blood circulation is adversely affected. Therefore, the delivery process of oxygen-rich blood to areas of the body dependent on those blood vessels is impeded.

These blood clots can hinder healthy blood flow and may eventually cause heart attack or stroke. This is why a person may be prescribed to take aspirin daily or otherwise regularly, to prevent this from happening.

The ability of aspirin to prevent blood clot formation lasts up to 10 days. However, high-risk individuals are required to take aspirin every day to ensure that the clotting tendency of newly released platelets into the bloodstream are inhibited.

What Aspirin Works Fast?

Non-coated aspirin tablets have been found to work faster compared to enteric-coated aspirin. The non-coated aspirin prevent blood clot formation within minutes from the time of ingestion.

What are the Side Effects of Long Term Use of Aspirin?

In addition to heart attack and stroke prevention, some people are required to take aspirin to reduce inflammation, fever and pain.

However, regardless of how effective aspirin is, regular intake comes with several harmful side effects. This is true especially if you have to take aspirin for extended periods. Some of these side effects include kidney and liver damage, ulcers, tinnitus and Reye's syndrome.

Some people who may face a higher risk of suffering from the dangerous side effects of aspirin are those people diagnosed with heart failure, stomach ulcers, asthma, diabetes, bleeding and clotting disorders.

If you want to avoid the side effects of aspirin, perhaps the following natural alternatives will interest you.

Natural Alternatives to Aspirin

- *Willow Bark*

The main ingredient used in manufacturing aspirin tablets actually comes from willow bark. So, if you are looking for a natural alternative to aspirin, try willow bark first. The analgesic effects of willow bark is attributed to its salicin content.

Once ingested, the salicin content of willow bark is converted into salicylic acid which is the chemical precursor to aspirin.

- *Ginger*

A study of 40 participants showed that the daily intake of ginger powder led to an 18% reduction of oxidation among the healthy (no coronary condition) participants.

By comparison, the participants diagnosed with coronary artery disease had a 23% reduction in oxidation.

Just like aspirin, the active properties in ginger act as a blood-thinner. This is why adding ginger to your daily diet can help prevent blood clot formation.

Ginger blocks the COX-2 enzyme which is known to play a role in promoting inflammation. Inflammation has been linked to several heart diseases and many forms of chronic illnesses.

- *Turmeric*

Turmeric has been found to work just as effectively as aspirin in relieving pain. Its anti-inflammatory action blocks cytokines and the COX-2 enzyme which is the target molecule of aspirin and other anti-inflammatory and blood thinning drugs.

For the blood-thinning effects of turmeric to take place, you need to ingest high doses of turmeric. However, too much can cause gastrointestinal problems for some people, so make sure to consult your alternative medicine practitioner. Alternatively, you can take turmeric supplements.

Ingesting turmeric must be avoided if you are taking warfarin which is a blood-thinning drug.

- *Cherries*

Researchers have revealed that the regular intake of cherries can lead to a reduction in inflammation. The participants of the study were asked to ingest cherries every day for 28 days.

The findings revealed a 25% reduction of C-reactive protein in the blood. C-reactive protein is marker of inflammation and having elevated levels of C-reactive proteins in the blood has been associated with an increased risk of stroke and heart disease.

If you decide to use any of these natural alternatives for aspirin, do so with caution, or at least consult with your doctor first, especially if you are currently taking any prescription blood-thinning drug.

In conclusion, regular aspirin intake can help reduce the severity of heart attacks or strokes, and also help prevent future heart attacks and strokes.

L-Arginine and Nitric Oxide for Blood Circulation

L-arginine is an amino acid that is known to have artery-protecting benefits due to its ability to boost nitric oxide levels. It is especially helpful for people who have heart problems. This amino acid is one of the key nutrients for promoting good blood circulation and for boosting cardiovascular health.

L-arginine is an essential amino acid which means that the body is not capable of producing it in sufficient quantities, therefore, the need to obtain it from dietary sources is necessary.

The benefits of L-Arginine can be attributed to the fact that it is a precursor to nitric oxide. L-arginine is the only nutritional substrate that is available in your blood vessel lining for nitric oxide production.

In other words, your body needs sufficient amounts of L-Arginine to be able to synthesize nitric oxide.

This ability of L-arginine to boost nitric oxide functioning promotes relaxation of blood vessels so that an improved blood flow can take place. This is also made possible because nitric oxide helps relax the smooth muscle cells which are found in most parts of the body except the heart.

As these muscle cells relax in a response to nitric oxide, vasodilation can take place. Vasodilation refers to the widening of blood vessels which allows blood pressure to drop and blood flow to improve.

L-arginine supplementation has been found by experts to be helpful in generating nitric oxide in the appropriate tissues with the help of ‘nitric oxide synthase’. Nitric oxide is a tiny molecule, which is why it can move within and around the cells.

Nitric Oxide for Improved Exercise Capacity

The physical aspect of blood circulation is called hemodynamics. If a person's 'hemodynamics' is improved, so too is a person's exercise capacity enhanced. As an individual's exercise capacity improves, so too does their circulation. Both help each other.

Experts have learned that nitric oxide is beneficial for increasing the efficiency of hemoglobin to produce oxygen-rich blood, resulting in enhanced oxygen delivery to the cells. This means that nitric oxide is highly important for our blood circulation and this is where L-arginine supplementation can prove helpful.

How to Enhance Nitric Oxide Production in the Body

One of the most effective ways to increase nitric oxide in the body is to exercise. Remember, L-arginine is required for nitric oxide production.

Thankfully, there are plenty of foods that are excellent sources of L-arginine. These foods include, lentils, eggs, fruits, nuts and grains.

When a person exercises, their heart pumps harder so that the muscles have plenty of blood flow and oxygen to sustain the exerted physical activity.

Subsequently, the lining in the arteries then produce nitric oxide. The nitric oxide is released into the blood which then leads the vessel walls to widen and relax, so that more blood can flow.

Exercise is very important, we all know that. It is especially important as we age. It is actually vitally important, because as an individual ages, their blood vessels and nitric oxide production becomes less efficient. This decline in efficiency, usually caused by free radical damage, deteriorates the arteries and the veins. Good diet and appropriate exercise can delay this effect.

Supplements That Improve Blood Flow and Circulation

If you have poor blood circulation there are natural supplements that can help improve your body's complex network of veins, capillaries and arteries to function more optimally. These types of supplements can help boost your blood flow and circulation. Here are a few examples:

Coenzyme Q10 – CoQ10 Supplements

Coenzyme Q10 is used for people with heart disease and related issues. A study conducted on people diagnosed with heart disease showed that a daily intake of 300mg of Coenzyme Q10 can help restore faulty antioxidant defense systems in the body's circulation system.

Patients who were asked to take Coenzyme Q10 supplements on a daily basis were found to have improved vascular relaxation.

CoQ10 supplementation was found to help improve the functioning of the heart, particularly in the left ventricle while it is in its relaxation phase. The relaxation phase of the left ventricle is crucial, as it is the phase when the heart is receiving a surge of blood.

Unfortunately, this process is impaired if an individual has to take statin drugs.

However, research shows that supplementation of CoQ10 for eight weeks at a dose of 300mg each day can significantly improve heart muscle functioning during the pumping phase. This is made possible as CoQ10 enhances the performance of endothelial and mitochondrial functioning of the body.

The ability of CoQ10 enzyme to improve blood flow can also be attributed to nitric oxide preservation which helps reduce the damaging effects of bad cholesterol in the blood vessels while also reducing the amount of plaque buildup in the arteries.

Omega-3 Supplements

Fish oil supplements have been used for helping heart disease related problems for years. Anyone with a heart or ‘blood flow’ problem is probably taking fish oil supplements, to make sure they are getting plenty of essential omega 3’s.

Omega 3 fatty acids are excellent for improving blood circulation, lowering blood pressure and improving blood cholesterol levels. Omega 3’s help prevent the blood vessels from becoming blocked. They can improve your good cholesterol, which in turn, helps get rid of the bad, the ones that block the arteries and impede blood flow.

Niacin – B3 Supplements

Niacin is also referred to as vitamin B3, and it helps dilate the blood vessels, including the capillaries, so that there is improved blood flow.

When your body experiences a 'niacin flush' it means that the blood vessels expand in size. This flushing effect is beneficial to a person's capillaries. This is because the capillaries are so small that the blood cells can hardly pass through.

They must wait their turn and flow through in single file! This flushing effect can also be felt on the skin. It's that warm to hot, tingling sensation.

While the use of supplements has been proven beneficial for improving blood flow and circulation, you should not start taking them without first consulting your health care provider.

Keep in mind that taking any kinds of supplements, especially if you are taking other medications, must be checked for compatibility.

Herbs and Spices for Improved Blood Circulation

A few herbs and spices can actively improve your blood circulation! If you have poor circulation, why not try a few natural herbs before you tread the path of pharmaceutical options. Here's a list of herbs and spices that are known to be potent circulation-boosters.

Cayenne Pepper

The warming sensation that you may experience soon after eating foods containing cayenne pepper is a sign that your blood circulation is moving well!

Besides improving circulation, cayenne pepper helps breakdown plaque in the arteries. It also helps in detoxifying the blood while strengthening the muscles in the cardiovascular system.

Studies have shown that cayenne pepper helps rebuild red blood cells and reduce heart palpitations. So, it's a good spice to add to your foods!

Hawthorn

Hawthorn has been used for the prevention of indigestion, high blood pressure, congestive heart failure, angina and atherosclerosis. This is because hawthorn contains antioxidants which are beneficial for stimulating blood flow and for strengthening the blood vessels.

A review conducted on 14 separate studies, showed that hawthorn contains active compounds that improve blood circulation, especially to people diagnosed with chronic heart failure. Plus, hawthorn has been found to work effectively in reducing blood fats and plaque, thereby lowering the risk of many diseases associated with cardiovascular disease and circulatory system problems.

Ginkgo Biloba

This is a very popular herb and is available in supplement form too. It has been ranked as the top selling herbal remedy in many countries. One reason for this is that Ginkgo Biloba improves blood circulation by dilating the blood vessels.

It also has potent compounds that make platelets less sticky. Another benefit of this herb is that it boosts blood flow to the brain, thereby reducing a person's risk of Alzheimer's disease.

It is also used for helping ease tinnitus symptoms. Again, it is because ginkgo biloba improves poor blood circulation, which is one of the causes of tinnitus.

Ginger Root

Ginger root is known to be a vasodilator which means it helps open the blood vessels. In turn, more blood can flow to all parts of the body.

In addition, ginger is helpful for lowering the levels of LDL (bad) cholesterol.

Another benefit is that it helps women during their menstrual cycle. Its blood thinning properties are beneficial for women at this time, as it may reduce their likelihood of having abdominal cramps.

Parsley

Parsley is another herb which has earned a good reputation for improving blood circulation. Parsley functions as a vasodilator. It is also an excellent source of many nutrients such as vitamins C and B12.

Pine bark extract

Pine bark extract's active compounds are known to positively influence system-wide circulation and help lower blood pressure.
This herb is used for strengthening blood vessels and works to ensure that all cells receive a sufficient supply of oxygen.

People who suffer with edema, which a condition characterized by an inflammation in the legs and ankles due to fluid buildup in the tissues, may benefit tremendously from the therapeutic effects of this herb.

Although these herbs are all natural and considered safe alternatives to any prescription on the market, it is still wise to consult your physician before taking any herbs as a self-treatment for poor blood circulation.

Super Foods to Power Up Your Body's Circulation

If you suffer with poor blood circulation there are certain super foods that can give your circulatory system a boost. Add some of the following whole foods to your next grocery list and see an improvement in your circulation problems.

Celery

Celery has a high water content. This water content contains potassium that is important for cellular cleansing and for improving fluid levels. Celery is also helpful for keeping blood pressure levels within a normal range.

Due to its amino acid content, celery is known as a natural "Viagra" because this amino acid content can help expand blood vessels, much like Viagra does.

It is also an excellent source of zinc, niacin, vitamin E and magnesium – nutrients that all play a role in boosting blood circulation.

Oats

Oats are excellent sources of soluble fiber. Oats work effectively in lowering the levels of LDL or bad cholesterol. This is because soluble fiber prevents cholesterol from being reabsorbed into the bloodstream.

How does this help improve your blood circulation? If you are lowering the bad cholesterol building up in your arteries, you are allowing better blood flow.

Eating five to ten grams of oats every day can help lower the levels of your LDL and total cholesterol. If you have problems with gluten intolerance, you may opt for gluten free oats. Soaking your oats overnight will also help improve its digestibility and alkalinity.

Cucumbers

Cucumbers contain active compounds that help to shuttle out waste and detoxify the body. Eating cucumbers can lead to improved skin tone, due to improved blood circulation.

Cucumbers are an alkaline vegetable. Therefore, they are helpful in regulating the pH level of the blood. Aside from helping people regulate their blood pressure, cucumbers can also be a wonderful aid for keeping the cartilage, tendons, ligaments, muscles and bones in good working order.

Plus, cucumbers also contain vitamin C, fiber and potassium which are all important for keeping the blood flowing smoothly.

Asparagus

Asparagus contains beta-carotene. It has powerful diuretic properties which makes asparagus beneficial for the kidneys, bladder and adrenal glands.

Some experts claim that asparagus is helpful for eliminating kidney stones, and it also helps to regulate blood circulation while encouraging liver health.

Avocados

If you are fortunate enough to eat an avocado a day, you can improve your blood cholesterol levels, and therefore, your blood flow and circulation.

A study showed that participants who consumed an avocado daily, reduced their triglycerides and LDL cholesterol levels. Their good cholesterol levels increased up to 11%. This is a good thing! Your arteries become healthy and more capable of clearing out obstructions. Besides improving your body's blood circulation, avocados also possess an impressive list of antioxidants and vitamins.

Conclusion

As we age, so to do the veins, arteries and capillaries that transport blood around our bodies. Too often, these vessels age at a faster rate than other parts of our body.

Collectively, how much longer could we live if our cardiovascular systems remained healthier, for longer? And how much more vital could our latter years be without clogged and restricted arteries and veins?

How healthy our circulatory system is largely comes down to how we treat our body. The nutrients or the poisons we feed it, and the amount and type of exercise we perform.

By taking steps to support our immune system as we age, with proper diet and exercise (and refraining from toxic inputs) we can prevent much of what is known as cardiovascular damage, and live a more vibrant and longer life.