

How to... improve circulation

December 26 2008, By Alison Johnson

If blood doesn't move well through your veins and arteries, your tissues and organs aren't getting enough oxygen and nutrients. Here are tips for avoiding heart disease and other major health problems that can result:

Be aware of trouble. Symptoms of poor circulation include tingling in the feet and hands, cold fingers and toes, bluish-tinted skin and slow-healing wounds. If you notice those problems, talk to your doctor.

Keep moving. Aim to exercise 30 minutes a day. If you spend a lot of time sitting, stand up or do some simple movements at least once an hour - for example, rotating your arms in small circles, tapping your knees and thighs with a fist or doing a few jumping jacks.

Drink smart. Water improves circulation; try it warm or at room temperature rather than iced. Alcohol, sodas and other sugary drinks can have the opposite effect.

Eat right. Limit sugar, salt and unhealthy fats such as full-fat dairy products, coconut oils and processed baked goods. Load up on fruits, vegetables and whole grains and eat moderate amounts of healthy fats found in fish, olive oil, avocado, nuts and sesame seeds.

Don't smoke. Nicotine use is a leading cause of circulation problems.

Put your feet up. Regularly prop up your legs for short periods of time.

Take a warm bath. Soaking your body, particularly your feet, in warm

water can boost blood flow.

Ask about supplements. Talk to your doctor about options such as B-complex vitamins, vitamin C, calcium, magnesium, omega 3 fish oil or herbal products.

Lower stress. Over time, mental anxiety can lead to circulatory problems. Find an enjoyable hobby, get enough sleep, exercise regularly and learn relaxation techniques such as deep breathing and yoga stretches.

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