

Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD)

We've all seen the TV ads that warn about the dangers of *peripheral artery disease* or PAD, and then promote some drug to treat it. PAD causes loss of normal blood circulation. The small arteries become blocked, reducing the amount of oxygen that can be supplied to the muscles. PAD usually affects the legs, but may involve the arms as well. Twelve to twenty percent of Americans over 65 suffer from peripheral arterial disease, even though many will not experience any symptoms.

PAD sufferers may experience intermittent claudication - or muscle pain or cramping - when walking or engaging in other activities. These symptoms generally disappear after a few minutes of rest. The location of the pain depends on where the artery is clogged or narrowed. Calf pain is most common. PAD may also lead to brittle, or thick and discolored toenails.

If you have signs or symptoms of PAD, you need to take action to correct the problem immediately. Treatment should focus on cleaning out the clogged arteries. Traditional medications used for PAD include aspirin (shown to be ineffective), Plavix, Trental and Pletal. None of these medications address the cause of the blocked arteries, and all have significant negative side effects. Alternative natural therapies, on the other hand, are both safe and effective.

Ginko Biloba helps to increase circulation. However, all herbal products are not created equal and they are not regulated for potency and quality. We prefer the **MediHerb** brand of **Ginko Biloba** from Australia, because we know we can trust the quality and potency of their products.

High quality **fish oil** and **Vitamin D** are extremely important. I have rarely tested a patient who had the correct levels of Vitamin D in their blood. The usual lab ranges are too conservative. The optimum level for Vitamin D 25-hydroxy is at least 80 mg/ml. Emulsified **Bio-D Mulsion** from Biotics is a readily absorbed form of Vitamin D3. **Standard Process** brand **Tuna Omega Oil** is an excellent fish oil product.

There are some other natural products that I like to use to help reverse the clogging of the arteries. I have had very good success with **CardioClear**, **Garlic 5000** (another MediHerb product), **Cataplex E2** (increases oxygen uptake by the cells), **Cayenne**, **Horse Chestnut** and **Hawthorn**. Again, I can't stress enough the importance in using herbal products that are standardized and of the highest quality and guaranteed potency.

I have watched patients achieve a 20% reduction in arterial blockage in only 12 months. That may not sound like much, but a 20% increase in blood flow is huge and can make all the difference in relieving PAD, and avoiding a stroke or heart attack.

Lifestyle changes are also critical to reversing PAD. If you smoke, PAD is another reason to stop. Make sure your blood sugar is well within the normal range, with Hemoglobin A1C levels below 5.7. Thirty minutes of exercise a day will also help to prevent PAD. Keep in mind that anything that will help PAD, will also help prevent cardiovascular disease or stroke.

A great test for evaluating the health of your arteries is the **Digital Pulse Analyzer** or DPA. This machine measures the health of your arteries (large, medium and small) and tells us if the delicate lining of the arteries is being damaged. If you are over 40 years old, you should get checked out to see if you are developing poor peripheral circulation.

PAD can be reversed. Again, a natural approach is safer and more effective. If you have PAD - or a personal or family history of cardiovascular disease - don't delay treatment. Make sure you have a

prevention plan. It takes years to develop PAD or any other form of vascular disease. If you are taking medication for PAD and want a natural alternative that really works, I would be happy to talk to you about options.

If you found this article of value and interest, please let us know. We love to hear your thoughts and suggestions.

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