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Peripheral Arterial Disease - The Foot and Heart Health Connection



February is American Heart Month and the perfect time to discuss a little-known fact: That your feet can give you an important clue as to your heart health!

Peripheral arterial disease (PAD), commonly called poor circulation, is the restriction of blood flow in the leg arteries. Plaque caused by the accumulation of cholesterol and other materials on the artery walls can cause the arteries to narrow. This reduces the amount of oxygen-rich blood to the extremities, especially the feet and legs.

The presence of PAD in the legs and feet can indicate more widespread arterial disease elsewhere in the body. This can affect the heart, causing a heart attack, or the brain resulting in a stroke.

Risk factors for PAD include being over age 50, a sedentary lifestyle, smoking, diabetes, high blood pressure or high cholesterol and a family history of PAD or heart disease.

The Relationship Between Peripheral Arterial Disease and Foot Problems

In a patient with PAD, small foot problems such as blisters, sores or cuts can result in serious complications because a normal blood flow is necessary for healing.

Those with diabetes often have nerve damage called neuropathy that can cause foot numbness, preventing the sensation of pain. Foot deformities and problems like ingrown or thickened fungal nails become more serious with the presence of PAD. Foot ulcers may develop over foot deformities and never heal. The combination of PAD and diabetes often cause toe, foot or leg amputations.

Diagnosing and Treating PAD

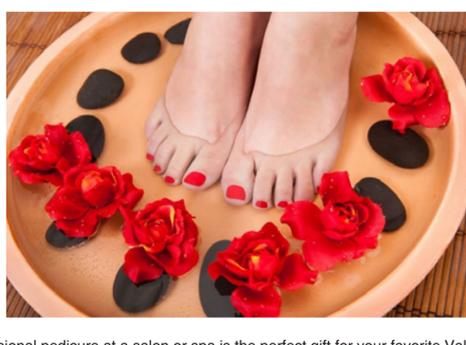
In the early stages of PAD, there are often no symptoms. Later when the arteries may be significantly blocked, symptoms can include leg cramping while walking or lying down, leg weakness or numbness, cold feet or legs, sores on toes, feet or legs that don't heal and changes in toenail thickness and color.

If you observe any of these symptoms, please come in to see us right away. Without professional treatment, PAD can lead to limb-threatening and debilitating results.

Effective treatment for PAD involves:

- Lifestyle changes such as getting regular exercise, eating a heart-healthy diet and quitting smoking
- Medication to prevent blood clots, improve blood flow and control blood glucose levels, blood pressure and cholesterol
- Surgery in some cases to improve blood flow through the arteries

Be Aware when you choose a Professional Pedicure



A professional pedicure at a salon or spa is the perfect gift for your favorite Valentine ... or just for you! But some salons may send you home with more than painted toenails. Certain nail services including pedicures have been linked to infections. Choose your nail salon carefully with our tips:

- Look around and observe the general cleanliness of the business.
- Check that current licenses for both the salon and technicians are displayed.
- Don't be afraid to speak up! Ask if the foot bath and filters have been sanitized.
- Schedule your pedicure early in the day when foot baths and other equipment are cleanest.
- Check that sterilized utensils are used for every client or consider investing in your own tools that you bring along with you. Always ask for a new emery board as these cannot be sterilized.
- Don't shave your legs within 24-48 hours **before** your appointment to prevent infection through tiny nicks in the skin.
- Postpone your pedicure if you observe any cuts, scratches or bug bites on your feet or legs.
- Ask the nail technician to use a pumice stone or foot file to remove dead skin rather than a foot razor, as the razor may take off too much.
- Don't let the technician cut your cuticles; instead, ask that they gently push them back.



Recipe of the Month Broccoli-Cheddar Soup



When following a healthy diet, watch out for high calorie cream soups. Here's a favorite that skips the cream.

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 pounds broccoli, thick stems peeled
- 4 cups chicken stock
- 3 cups water
- 8 ounces shredded white cheddar cheese

Directions

- In a medium heavy pot, heat the oil over medium heat, then stir in the onion, garlic, 1 teaspoon of salt and 1/2 teaspoon of pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is translucent, about 5 minutes. Stir in the broccoli, stock and water and simmer, partially covered, until the broccoli is tender, 15 to 20 minutes.
- Puree the soup in batches in a blender and return it to the pot. Stir in 6 ounces of the cheese, then season the soup with salt and pepper to taste. Divide the soup among six soup bowls and top with the remaining cheese.

Recipe courtesy of foodandwine.com

History FootNote

Thousands of years ago, noblemen in southern Babylonia used solid gold tools to give themselves pedicures and manicures.

Celebrity Foot Focus

Celebrities, socialites and royals enjoy the poshest pedicurist in the world at Margaret Dabbs' London salon, where a full pedicure treatment can cost up to \$2,500.

Trivia

**Athlete's foot is caused by bacteria found in places such as gyms, locker rooms, and nail salons.**

- A. True
- B. False

Answer: **False**

Explanation:

Athlete's foot is caused by a fungus, not bacteria. The medical name for athlete's foot caused by a fungus is tinea pedis and can be contracted in many locations, including gyms, locker rooms, swimming pools, nail salons, airport security lines, from contaminated socks and clothing, and from direct person-to-person by contact. Another colorful name for this condition is "jungle rot," often used by members of the armed services serving in tropical climates.

Joke of the Month:

Valentine Dreams

One morning Emma woke up with a start. Her husband Jim asked what was the matter. She told him, "I just had a dream that you gave me a pearl necklace for Valentine's day. What do you think it means?"

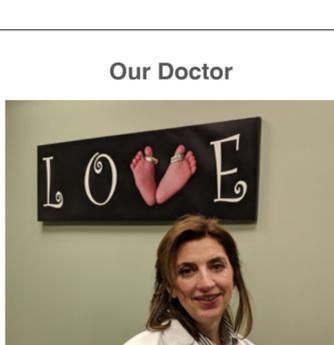
"You'll know tonight," Jim said.

That evening, Jim came home with a small package and gave it to his wife. Delighted, Emma opened it - only to find a book entitled "The meaning of dreams".

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