

Health Connection

BROUGHT TO YOU BY ORO VALLEY HOSPITAL

7 steps to healthy veins

Give your medicine cabinet a makeover!

5 super foods for good health

Control your cholesterol



ORO VALLEY HOSPITAL

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The vein truth

How to keep your blood flowing

Normally, you don't think about them much. Your veins are just there, transporting blood to your heart from other organs and tissues on a daily basis. But when veins become visible, painful or begin affecting your health, you can't ignore them any longer.

WHEN GOOD VEINS GO BAD

Two conditions that you may encounter are:

- **Varicose veins.** When one-way valves in the veins fail to keep blood moving forward, the blood pools, causing swelling. That leaves you with bulging, twisting veins located just under the surface of the skin. While they rarely cause symptoms, varicose veins can lead to pain, blood clots and skin ulcers. You have a greater chance of developing varicose veins if you have a family history of varicose veins or are older, a woman, pregnant, overweight or obese or inactive. Varicose veins can be treated by procedures or surgery, including laser surgery, where laser light energy fades veins.
- **Deep vein thrombosis (DVT).** DVT is a blood clot that forms in a vein deep within the body, usually in the lower legs or thighs. It can cause a serious problem called pulmonary embolism, which occurs when the clot breaks free and travels to the lungs. Sitting for a long time can increase your risk of getting a blood clot, as can having

surgery and taking hormone therapy or other medications. Symptoms of DVT include pain, swelling, skin redness and warmth and tenderness over the vein. Your physician may prescribe anti-clotting medications to treat DVT.

PREVENTING PROBLEMS

You can take steps to help reduce your risk of vein problems, or help you manage if you already have them. To keep veins in their place:

- **Get moving.** Exercise can help blood move through veins.
- **Avoid sitting or standing for too long.** Don't cross your legs, and if you can, raise your legs above the level of your heart when sitting or resting. If you've had surgery, get moving as soon as possible afterward.
- **Lose weight.** This will help blood flow and take some of the pressure off your veins.
- **Toss your tight clothes.** Don't wear anything that's tight around your waist, groin or legs, as it can cut off blood flow.
- **Skip the stilettos, ladies.** Low heels can help tone calf muscles, which can get blood moving through your veins.
- **Ask your physician about compression stockings.** They can help keep blood from pooling and reduce leg swelling.
- **Get up and walk around while traveling.** If traveling by car, try to stop every hour for a walking break.

Medicine cabinet makeover

Taking stock can keep your family healthy

Is your medicine cabinet a disaster area, a catchall for old medications, unlabeled bottles and other hazards? If you answered yes, a good cleaning at least once a year is recommended.

So where do you start? First, move all your medicine out of the medicine cabinet, since it's not recommended that you store medicine in the bathroom. Bathrooms are humid places, and that humidity can make your medicines less effective, or, in extreme cases, toxic. Instead, find a cool, dry place to keep your medicines.

Next, get rid of any medication that's expired. However, don't throw it down the toilet, which poses an environmental risk. Instead, throw old drugs in the trash, taking care to mix them with kitty litter or coffee grounds to make them less attractive to children and pets.

Also, make sure to keep medication in its original container, which contains important information like when the drug expires, how much to take, possible drug interactions and who it was prescribed for. Don't leave that cotton plug in any bottles either, as it can draw moisture into the bottle.

Here are some things you may have in your cabinet that deserve a closer look:



Clean out your medicine cabinet at least once a year to keep your family healthy and safe.

SYRUP OF IPECAC. It used to be recommended to make a child throw up if he or she had swallowed poison. However, there's no evidence it works and it may actually cause other treatments to fail. Throw it out! Instead, call poison control in an emergency.

COUGH AND COLD MEDICINE. It's not recommended for kids younger than age 4. And never give a child an adult-strength medication, as it could cause a serious reaction.

ASPIRIN. It's safe for most adults, but if you have kids, be extra careful. Aspirin's been linked to a rare

condition called Reye's syndrome, which can cause brain damage and liver function problems in children and teens, especially those taking the drug to treat chickenpox or the flu. Instead, keep other pain relievers and fever reducers, like acetaminophen and ibuprofen, on hand.

UNUSED ANTIBIOTICS. Don't save them for later or give them to another person. Get rid of them.

THERMOMETERS. If they break, old mercury thermometers can expose you to toxic mercury. Use an oral thermometer for older kids; choose an axillary (under the armpit) or rectal one for younger children.



Heart disease: Early detection is key

New tools to check your risk

Don't sit on the bench when it comes to your heart health. At Oro Valley Hospital and Rancho Vistoso Urgent Care, two heart screenings are available, and you don't need a physician's order for either.

You can check your heart health with:

- cardiac calcium scoring
- aortic aneurysm ultrasound

CARDIAC CALCIUM SCORING

Cardiac calcium scoring is a quick, noninvasive test to detect heart disease. Physicians can detect coronary artery disease at an early stage before symptoms appear.

Cardiac calcium scoring uses a CT scanner to obtain images of the heart. Physicians can pinpoint the location and extent of any calcified plaque in the coronary arteries. Plaque, a buildup of fat, calcium and other substances, can over time narrow the arteries or close off blood flow to the heart. The result can be a heart attack.

Your calcium score gives your physician a clue as to whether coronary artery disease is present or likely to develop in the next few years. This helps your physician decide a course of treatment and whether you need more tests.

Offered at Oro Valley Hospital, a cardiac calcium scan costs only \$125, due at the time of the screening.

AORTIC ANEURYSM ULTRASOUND

Aortic aneurysm ultrasound is a quick, noninvasive screening that uses high-frequency sound waves to create images

of the abdominal artery that supplies blood to the lower part of the body and legs.

A radiologist evaluates your screening images to look for any indications of:

- a weakening of the aortic wall
- a ballooning of the aorta

A ruptured aortic aneurysm is the thirteenth leading cause of death in the United States. When aortic aneurysms are diagnosed early, treatment is safe and effective. The combination of early diagnosis and modern treatment can save countless lives.

You may be a candidate for an aortic aneurysm ultrasound if you:

- are older than 60
- have high blood pressure, heart disease, high cholesterol or diabetes
- are a smoker
- have a family history of ruptured aneurysms

Available at Rancho Vistoso Urgent Care, the aortic aneurysm ultrasound procedure costs only \$60, due at the time of the screening.



Protect your heart!

Make an appointment or buy a gift certificate for a cardiac calcium scan or an aortic aneurysm ultrasound. Call (520) 469-8810.



Make your varicose veins vanish

The Northwest Vein Center at Oro Valley Hospital can help

It's estimated that more than 25 million people in the United States suffer from painful symptoms of varicose veins—twisted, bulging or lumpy veins just below the skin's surface. If you have varicose veins, new minimally invasive technology at the Northwest Vein Center at Oro Valley Hospital can help relieve your symptoms and improve your legs' appearance.

In some cases, varicose veins may require medical attention. It's important to be aware of varicose vein symptoms so they can be caught at an early stage and treated before they develop into a more serious venous disease. Signs and symptoms include:

- leg pain or heaviness
- leg swelling
- discolored or itchy skin
- blood clots that form just below the leg's skin
- sores or skin ulcers on the leg

WHAT CAUSES VARICOSE VEINS?

A series of one-way valves control blood flow in the veins. When valves fail to operate properly, disease may develop. Blood can leak or flow backward, especially in the legs. This backward flow is called "venous reflux." This can lead to elevated blood pressure in the veins, or venous hypertension. If left untreated, varicose veins and underlying venous hypertension can result in intense inflammation in the vein wall, valves and skin, as well as blood clots, skin damage and leg ulcers.

Spider veins are another common vein problem. Like varicose veins, spider veins also lie just below the skin's surface but usually appear as red or blue blotches. They aren't normally considered a serious health threat.

TREATMENT AND RELIEF

At the Northwest Vein Center at Oro Valley Hospital, we offer new, advanced technology that can treat varicose and

spider veins in just a few office visits. These treatments are simple, minimally invasive and covered by most insurance, including Medicare. If you have varicose or spider veins, Alex Westerband, M.D., can help improve your legs' appearance and relieve the pain, swelling and cramping varicose veins and venous disease can cause.



Rejuvenate your legs!

For a consultation, call Dr. Westerband at (520) 901-6230 or visit orovalleyhospital.com.



**NORTHWEST
VEIN CENTER**

at Oro Valley Hospital

HEALTHWISE QUIZ

How much do you know about **diabetes**?

Take this quiz to find out.



CURB YOUR CHOLESTEROL

Every year, more than a million Americans have heart attacks, and about 500,000 die from heart disease. One of the major risk factors for such heart trouble is high cholesterol. This fatlike substance builds up in your arteries and slows or blocks blood flow to the heart.

Some experts recommend that you start cholesterol testing by age 20; others say to start at age 35. Using a simple blood test called a lipoprotein profile, your physician can determine if your cholesterol levels are too high. Here's what's considered healthy:

>**Total cholesterol:** less than 200 mg/dL

>**LDL (bad) cholesterol:** less than 100 mg/dL is optimal; 100 to 129 mg/dL is near optimal/above optimal

>**HDL (good) cholesterol:** 60 mg/dL or higher may protect the heart; less than 40 mg/dL for men (less than 50 for women) puts you at a greater risk for heart problems

>**Triglycerides (another type of blood fat):** less than 150 mg/dL

WORK ON IT

Are your levels higher than they should be? You can often make a big impact on your cholesterol by making a few small changes:

- **Cut back on saturated fat and cholesterol.** The American Heart Association recommends that you keep your saturated fat consumption to less than 7 percent of your total daily calories. So if you consume about 2,000 calories a day, no more than 140 of them should come from saturated fat, or about 16 grams a day. Avoid trans fats and stock up on fruits, vegetables, whole grains and foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids (salmon, walnuts, almonds).

- **Get active.** Engage in physical activity for at least 30 minutes daily.

- **Lose weight.** Being active and revamping your diet can help. Dropping even 5 to 10 pounds can lower cholesterol.

- **Quit smoking.**

- **Follow your physician's advice.** That includes taking medication, if needed.

1 Which of the following is not a symptom of type 2 diabetes?

- a. fatigue
- b. increased hunger
- c. difficulty urinating
- d. slow wound healing

2 Having diabetes can increase your chances of developing:

- a. glaucoma
- b. digestive problems
- c. gingivitis
- d. all of the above

3 Your physician may diagnose you with diabetes by performing a:

- a. thyroid test
- b. glucose test
- c. complete blood count
- d. none of the above

4 According to the National Institutes of Health, what percentage of people with type 2 diabetes are overweight?

- a. 60
- b. 70
- c. 80
- d. 90

5 Which of these statements about diabetes is true?

- a. You don't have to avoid sweets and chocolate.
- b. You'll eventually develop it if you're overweight.
- c. It makes you more likely to get colds or other illnesses.
- d. Eating too much sugar can cause it.

ANSWERS: 1. (c) 2. (d) 3. (b) 4. (c) 5. (a)

Flu, flu, go away!

It's fall again, and with the changing of the seasons often comes the dreaded flu. Recently, the seasonal flu has been upstaged somewhat by H1N1. Both strains are serious, may lead to complications such as pneumonia and bronchitis and can result in hospitalization and even death.

You can't always keep flu out of your home, but you can certainly reduce the risk of getting infected. Try these tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- **Get vaccinated.** This year, the seasonal flu vaccine comprises three strains of flu including H1N1. It's especially important for pregnant women; young children; people older than 65; people who have chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease or lung disease; and others at high risk for complications.
- **Play defense.** Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue out; wash

your hands often (use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available); keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth; avoid close contact with sick people; and stay away from crowds during a flu outbreak. Stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone.

- **Take your medicine.** If you get sick, your physician may recommend an antiviral drug to make the symptoms milder, shorten the time you're sick and prevent complications.



5 must-eat foods

Despite what you might read on the Internet, there's no magic food to prevent disease or cure you of all your ills. However, certain foods are high in antioxidants, vitamins and minerals and, when combined with an overall healthy diet, may help you maintain good health. Consider adding these good, and good-for-you, foods to your diet:

1 Blueberries. Blueberries have plenty of fiber and vitamins A and C, and they may improve short-term memory. Add them to cereal or yogurt for a tart kick.



2 Sardines. Those little fish canned in oil pack a powerful nutrient punch, supplying plenty of protein, calcium and heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids and vitamins B12 and D. Try them in sandwiches, salads or sauces.

3 Almonds. Thanks to good fats, vitamin E and fiber, almonds are exceptionally good for your heart. Grab a small handful daily or sprinkle them on a salad.



4 Red beans. They're high in potassium, iron and magnesium (not to mention low in fat and an excellent source of protein), and may play a role in preventing heart disease and some forms of cancer. Try adding them to stews instead of meat.

5 Sweet potatoes. That orange color is due to loads of beta carotene, which may help slow the aging process. Sweet potatoes also provide vitamins B6, C and E; folate; and potassium. Try them baked or sliced into wedges for another take on french fries.

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Affairs of the heart

Start a healthy relationship with our cardiac team

Our Touch My Heart program is off and running. The program features the expertise of Oro Valley Hospital's cardiac team that provides you with the medical technology, personalized education and care you need to enjoy a full and healthy life.

When you join Touch My Heart, you develop a health plan with activities suggested by Touch My Heart Oro Valley Hospital and its Touch My Heart partners. Your plan is based on Touch My Heart's Seven Pillars for Improving Cardiac Wellness. You receive a wallet-sized card to identify you as a Touch My Heart member, which will be recognized at Oro Valley Hospital, local businesses and social groups (such as hiking clubs, hobby groups and support groups). When you present your card at Oro Valley Hospital, our skilled Touch My Heart team will know to interact quickly with you if you need our services.

You can also choose to have your online plan, which contains important information, submitted electronically to an Oro Valley Hospital Touch My Heart team member for feedback on your plan's appropriateness and balance.

THE SEVEN PILLARS OF THE TOUCH MY HEART PROGRAM

The Seven Pillars for Improving Cardiac Wellness are clinically proven to improve cardiovascular health and reduce the chance of individuals experiencing a cardiac disease-related event.



The seven pillars are:

1. social contacts
2. increased activity
3. weight control
4. emotional management
5. compliance with medical management
6. diet
7. smoking cessation



Make the commitment

Register today to become a member of Touch My Heart.
Visit orovalleyhospital.com.