

## **Blue worms!**

When I was a kid, I used to wonder what those big blue worms were around the legs of older people. Eventually I found out they were varicose veins, and they're more common in women than men, with standing for long periods of time being one major risk factor. Constipation is another.

Weakening in the vein wall leads to insufficient pressure to get the blood back to the heart, so the veins grow, and they ache.

What can you do about them? Natural therapies are very unlikely to cure varicose veins, but there are several things you can do to improve them, even a little bit. Increasing your exercise, particularly doing walking or swimming is the first thing. This helps your weight and your whole cardio-vascular system, not to mention your lymphatics, lungs, thyroid and many other organs. Doing some yoga exercises could be helpful too, especially those which tone the leg muscles and send blood back to the heart.

Diet-wise, if bulging veins are due to constipation, then you need to increase water and fibre in your diet. A couple of pieces of fresh fruit, some lettuce or raw veg, and a bottle or two of water every day will help, though if your thyroid is under-performing, then this may complicate matters, so a thorough health check is warranted. Kelp is a good natural thyroid balancer, and is fairly inexpensive, but have some tests first to check on this.

It's good to strengthen those blood vessel walls and help break down excess fibrin. Nutrients which help to do this are vitamin C, glucosamine, bioflavonoids and zinc. Increasing garlic, onions, ginger and capsicum in your diet will help too. Fish oils, vitamin E and bromelain also reduce the risk of thrombosis, as well as providing antioxidants and anti-inflammatory nutrients. Bromelain helps digestion.

Topically you can apply witch hazel to the veins. Use a piece of cotton wool soaked in the tincture, or buy it as a cream. It's important to have good skin care around these areas, because there is the possibility of ulcers.

It's worthwhile having your varicose veins checked, as there can be a risk of strokes or pulmonary embolisms if the deeper veins are affected. Superficial veins pose no risk. Don't ignore blue worms!

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[Advice in these columns is of a general nature only and is not to be taken as specific treatment.]