

## Varicose Veins/Hemorrhoids

A tendency to varicosities (weak or broken spots in the veins) in the rectum (hemorrhoids) and in the legs, groin and vulva (varicose veins) is often inherited. Ask your grandmothers, mothers, and sisters if they were bothered during or after their pregnancies and if they were, be especially careful not to stress your body by long periods of standing or constipation. Even if they weren't, take care of your circulatory and eliminatory systems are preventative maintenance. The increased blood volume during pregnancy stresses the veins, and the heightened levels of progesterone (normal during pregnancy) relax the smooth muscles and impair venous return of the blood; both things make varicosities more likely. Sometimes varicosities don't appear until after the delivery; it is not unusual to suddenly have huge hemorrhoids two or three days after giving birth. Commercial preparations such as Preparation H, Americanise, and Anusol should not be used for hemorrhoids during pregnancy because they contain local anesthetics and mercury which are absorbed through the skin can be harmful to the fetus. These herbal remedies, including exercise and diet, prevent and deal safely with varicosities, whether you experience them before, during, or after your pregnancy.

### Exercise for Varicosities

- **Leg inversions** help prevent varicose veins, backaches and muscles cramps. Lie on your back on the floor, propping your lower legs up on a couch, chair, or bed, and bending the knees. Relax for 10-15 minutes, then stand and gently slap up and down your legs with open palms.
- **Inverted yoga postures** - headstands, plow, shoulder stand-relieve the pressure on the lower veins. They are best done with expert guidance, especially during the last months.
- **Swimming** and brisk **walking** are excellent exercises for the circulatory system; both aid digestion and help keep the bowels working regularly.

### Also for Varicosities

- **Support stockings**, while not a replacement for exercise, are useful if your life requires a lot of standing and you have a tendency toward varicose veins. Raise your legs up high for a while before putting the stockings on.
- A five minute leg **massage** daily feels great and does wonders. Work up, with the flow of the veins, and work hard and deep.
- **Avoid:** tight clothing, knee-high stocking, crossing your legs, sitting in one position for a long time (like in the car), high heeled shoes, and straining at the toilet.

### Diet for Varicosities

- **Raw garlic, onions and lecithin** (especially the liquid form) help veins maintain or regain elasticity. Eat them daily.
- Okra, buckwheat, oats, wheat germ, and **green leafy vegetables** nourish and strengthen the entire circulatory system.
- Foods rich in vitamins A, C, E, and B complex (B for hemorrhoids) are recommended for all circulatory problems.
- **Rutin**, found naturally in association with vitamin C, is specific for repairing broken capillaries. Buckwheat, Rue, and Elder leaves are notable spruces of rutin. CAUTION: Do not take rutin tablets during the first trimester.
- **Beets**, grated and steamed, cleanse liver and promote easy elimination, thus relieving stress on hemorrhoids.
- Vitamin E supplements are helpful in preventing and reducing varicosities; up to 600 IU daily is considered safe during pregnancy.
- **Avoid** all spices, especially Cayenne and Black Pepper and hot sauces and curries. These increase congestion in the offending veins, often causing bleeding from the hemorrhoids.

### Herbs for Varicosities

- **Oatstraw** tea or infusion is useful to strengthen the capillaries. Drink one or two cups daily; there is no known overdose.
- **Nettle leaf** infusion improves the elasticity of the veins, Use at ;east one cup per day throughout pregnancy and lactation.

- **Parsley** raw or as a tea is beneficial to the veins. Use it abundantly in salads or drink up to have a cup of tea daily.
- **Avoid** internal use of Aloe Vera products, and tea of Yellow or White Sweet Clover, as these herbs draw blood to the lower half of the body and can increase the problem. (Red Clover tea doesn't)

#### **First Aid for Varicose Veins**

- Apply **Witch Hazel** (from the drugstore) with a plant mister or a saturated cloth. The astringency is pain relieving and helps tighten the tissues and reduce the swelling.
- Prepare an infusion or fresh poultice of **Comfrey, Yarrow, or Mullein** leaves and apply as a compress to ease achiness and tighten veins.
- Wash varicosities with **Oak bark** infusion or apple cider vinegar to soothe pain.

#### **First Aid for Hemorrhoids**

- Apply **baking soda**, wet or dry, to take away the itch. (This may feel hot or burning for a short while.)

#### **Wise Woman Herbal**

- Try homeopathic **Hamamelis 30x**.
- Apply lemon juice or **drugstore Witch Hazel** to reduce swelling, stop bleeding, and ease pain.
- **Apply Comfrey or Yellow Dock root ointment** to reduce swelling, stop bleeding, and ease pain.
- Insert a peeled clove of Garlic (which may be wrapped in one layer of gauze and oiled) into the rectum overnight to minimize swelling.
- Use a **Plantain and Yarrow ointment** to relieve pain immediately and to shrink hemorrhoids within a few days. This combination salve has restored normalcy to some women who have been incapacitated for years.
- Eliminate even severely swollen, protruding and bleeding hemorrhoids with herbal sitz baths. Witch Hazel is indisputably the best herb for this, but Plantain leaves, Comfrey root, White Oak bark, Sea Grape leaves/bark or other strong astringents may be substituted. Prepare an infusion of the herb, making 8 cups (4oz of dried herb in a half gallon of boiling water, steeped for 8 hours). Separate the liquid from the herbs and pour it into a shallow basin or pan. Sit in this for 15 minutes at least twice a day. Don't worry about getting every hemorrhoid wet; the herbs are absorbed through the skin and work their magic without direct contact. Most people experience pain relief with the first sitz bath, and the hemorrhoids often shrink and disappear within a few days. This may be repeated as often as you desire, using the same liquid over and over.