

YOUR HEALTH & HAPPINESS

Ten Tips For Healthy Legs

(NAPSA)—A few simple steps can help women have healthier, more energetic legs. That's important, because doctors say that most women will have some sort of leg complaint, ranging from spider veins to muscle cramps, at some point in their lives.

"Women tend to focus on having glamorous looking legs, however, they need to put an emphasis on having healthy legs. Of course, the good news is that healthy legs will also be stronger and better looking than their unhealthy counterparts," says Donnica Moore, MD President of Sapphire Women's Health Group and former women's health contributor to NBC's "Later Today" show. She offers these tips for healthier, more energetic legs:

- Run, walk or jog for 20 to 30 minutes a day. This should be the mantra for healthy legs. These weight-bearing exercises help build bone and muscle strength.

- Take your vitamins. Getting adequate dietary or supplemental calcium and vitamin D is critical when it comes to bone strength.

- Leave the stilettos in the closet. High heels can cause knee problems and disabling injuries. Avoid daily use of heels over two inches in height. Also don't wear shoes that are too tight.

- Take walking breaks throughout the day. If you have to stand or sit for extended periods at work, take a 5 to 10 minute walk two to three times a day or move your legs around under your desk. This will aid in circulation.

- Take a shower instead of a bath. Prolonged or excessive heat from long hot baths can dilate blood vessels.

- Elevate the legs when you watch television or read a book. This will give your circulation sys-



GETTING A LEG UP on healthy legs includes wearing comfortable shoes and support hosiery that may enhance circulation.

tem a well-earned rest since it will not have to pump blood upwards

- Moisturize the skin you're in. Very dry skin may contribute to varicose vein formation. Massage lotion into your skin. This will also aid in circulation.

- Don't cross your legs. It may seem ladylike but this can constrict blood flow in the ankles and knees.

- Don't smoke. There are lots of reasons not to smoke but as far as the legs are concerned, smoking can increase the risk of direct damage to the vein walls as well as increasing the risk of high blood pressure and osteoporosis.

- Listen to your legs. Know which symptoms need to be brought to your doctor's attention. Symptoms to be aware of include leg or ankle swelling; leg pain or tenderness; varicose veins; numbness or tingling down the legs; leg cramping; and skin discoloration or ulceration. These can all be symptoms of more serious leg health issues such as leg injury, deep venous thrombosis, which are blood clots in the legs or diabetes.