

People with Peripheral Artery Disease May Have an Omega-3 Deficiency

New research suggests that people with peripheral artery disease (PAD) could have lower omega-3 levels in their red blood cells than people without the disease.

PAD affects [8.5 million Americans and more than 200 million people nationwide](#). It is a common circulatory problem that leads to narrowed arteries in the extremities and insufficient blood flow to keep up with demand. It damages the arteries [in the same way that heart disease normally does](#). The process is called atherosclerosis.

[Evidence](#) from other studies shows that omega-3s improve cardiovascular health. They have been seen to improve the function of the lining of the blood vessels, delaying the development of atherosclerotic plaque, as well as exerting antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and antithrombotic actions.

In the study, the red blood cells fatty acid content of 145 patients with PAD and 34 people without the disease was analyzed. The ratio of omega-3 oils to omega-6 oils was also compared.

The results showed that PAD sufferers had lower average omega-3 levels and omega-3 to omega-6 ratio. In fact, just a 1% decrease in omega-3 levels was associated with a 39% increase in PAD risk. The total saturated fat level in the blood cells of PAD patients was also higher.

It is thought that these differences in fatty acid content could be linked to the development of the disease or poor health outcomes in those with PAD.

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