

## Natural Help 4...

# Blood Thinners



## What are Blood Thinners?

The term '[blood thinners](#)' refers to a group of allopathic medications known as [anticoagulants](#). They are used to **prevent the cells in the blood from clotting too readily** and forming [blood clots](#) within the vessels.

Although they are referred to as [blood thinners](#), they **do not actually thin the blood**. They work by decreasing the blood's ability to clot so that blood vessels remain unblocked.

## Who Should Use Blood Thinners?

[Blood thinners](#) are administered to those who are **most at risk of a heart attack, stroke, or aneurysm**. They may also be used for the prevention of thromboembolic disorders, while some are used to treat thromboembolism.

## What Blood Thinners are Available?

The **most common [blood thinner](#) used is aspirin**, which significantly inhibits platelet activity-- one of the first steps in the clotting process. Sometimes, a small daily dose of aspirin is all that is required to treat heart conditions.

## Aspirin Use With Children

The use of aspirin as a [blood thinner](#) for children **must be monitored**. If a child has a fever or certain viral infections such as [influenza](#), gastric flu, or chicken pox, aspirin must be stopped immediately. The use of aspirin has been associated with Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening disease that causes major damage to the body's organs.

When aspirin is not strong enough to stop blood platelets from forming clots, the second most common [blood thinners](#) used are oral [anticoagulants](#). They should be used only under close medical supervision, as **they do have adverse side effects**, such as severe bleeding after bruising or cutting the skin.

More **powerful [blood thinners](#)** can be injected intravenously with a needle directly into the bloodstream, where they work to rapidly dissolve clots.

**Natural and holistic treatments** such as herbal and homeopathic remedies can also effectively support the **overall functioning** of the heart, arteries, and cardiovascular system by promoting healthy circulation. Under medical supervision, natural alternatives to the prescription [blood thinners](#) can be **very**

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**effective** and may **avoid the side effects experienced** when using conventional medications.

## Herbs Effective in Aiding Healthy Bodily Functioning

Herbs such as Crataegus oxyacantha (Hawthorn) have **well-known cardiovascular properties**, while Passiflora incarnata relaxes blood vessels and reduces blood pressure. In addition, Viburnum opulus (Guelder Rose bark) is a very effective cardiac tonic and muscle relaxant, while Ginkgo biloba improves blood flow throughout the body.

*Note: Remember to source your natural medicines from a reputable company in order to ensure maximum safety and efficacy. If you are already using a prescription [blood thinner](#), it is important to consult your doctor before adding any natural remedies to your treatment regimen.*

## How to Use Blood Thinners

There are various kinds of [blood thinners](#), and it is advisable to consult with your doctor regarding proper dosage. Other medicines that you may be taking can **increase or decrease the effect** of the [blood thinners](#). Be sure to inform your doctor about any other medication, even if it is just a vitamin supplement.

Your doctor should also be **aware of your medical history**, as well as any physical symptoms that you may be experiencing before taking blood thinners.

It is also recommended that you **follow a healthy diet**. In particular, you may need to limit your intake of vitamin K, generally found in liver, fish, cabbage, spinach, brussel sprouts and other green, leafy vegetables.

Avoid smoking and refrain from drinking large quantities of alcohol.

## The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is not the only treatment option. Conventional western medicine, often called allopathic medicine, is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools and most pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine is also sometimes called orthodox medicine.


Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that only a few decades ago, **homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available – and freely used** even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is ‘better’ than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that both have a role to play in the treatment program.

Natural medicine has often been frowned upon by conventional doctors, especially by those who did not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce



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### Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

it into their course work, thereby providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, **natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed** by conventional doctors, and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the **body has an innate capacity to heal itself**. While natural medicines are often called 'alternative' or 'complimentary' medicines, they are, in fact, a unique and independent form of medicine in their own right, well able to treat a variety of conditions. Perhaps the term 'holistic' medicine is more apt, given the **broad range of treatment options and approaches** that are to be found within the practice of natural medicine. Holistic medicine encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a holistic way to **support health, relieve symptoms, and prevent future disease**. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "...more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to support health (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer. In many cases, **holistic medicine can accomplish just as much**, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction, and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs.

Contrary to common perception-- and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way-- **natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing**. In many cases, they can succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed. Despite frequent reports that they are 'unproven' and 'untested', the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a **long history of usage and there is a wealth of empirical evidence to support their effectiveness and safety**. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines.

It is also important to know that like any medicine, **herbal and homeopathic medicines must be manufactured in the correct way**, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately, not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – and giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called 'standardized' extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be

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further from the truth. While ‘standardized’ extracts may offer the benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper production lines), they have grave disadvantages, including an increase in side effects-- as the **medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties** of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the **Full Spectrum Method of extraction**, which retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

Whatever your choice, always choose wisely. **Research what is best for you.** If you have a chronic or life-threatening condition, don’t make changes without first discussing them with your doctor in order that your condition may be monitored. Well informed and supportive practitioners will support patients who want to take responsibility for their own health.

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