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Vascular disease is the term used to describe a disease of the blood vessel. Blood vessels are the tubes used to pump blood all throughout the body. There are three types of blood vessels: arteries, veins, and capillaries.

Arteries carry oxygen-rich blood from the heart to every other part of the body. When a disease occurs in the arteries, it is called an arterial disease. Veins return blood from the other parts of the body back to the heart. When a disease occurs in the veins, it is called a venous disease. Capillaries are tiny blood vessels within the tissues that transport blood from the artery to a vein.

Vascular disease is a serious disease of the arteries and veins that blocks circulation anywhere in the body. Vascular disease is serious and can lead to disability, amputation, organ damage and even death. ([www.vascular-disease.org](http://www.vascular-disease.org))

### **Peripheral Vascular Disease**

The term peripheral vascular disease is a general term for disease of any blood vessel that is not part of the heart or brain. It affects the [peripheral circulation](#), as opposed to the cardiac circulation. PVD comprises diseases of both peripheral arteries and peripheral veins.

Two of the most common peripheral vascular diseases are thrombophlebitis and varicose veins.

### **Thrombophlebitis**

Thrombophlebitis occurs when a blood clot causes swelling in one or more of your veins, typically in your legs. In rare cases, it can affect veins in your arms and neck. Thrombophlebitis symptoms include: warmth, tenderness, pain, redness and swelling of the affected area. This condition is caused by blood clots. Blood clots may develop when there is injury to a vein and if a person has an inherited blood-clotting disorder. If a person is diagnosed with this condition, the doctor will prescribe blood-thinning and clot-dissolving medications. Wearing support stockings can also help. Sometimes the doctor suggests a surgery either to remove the clot or bypass the vein.

### **Varicose Veins**

On the other hand, varicose veins develop when the valves in the vein do not function properly, allowing blood to stay in the vein. In a normal vein, valves in the vein help keep the blood flowing forward to the heart. Blood that pools causes swelling of the vein. Signs and symptoms include: visible swollen veins, mild swelling of ankles, and fullness or pain in the legs. If a

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person is diagnosed to have varicose veins, the doctor recommends wearing of elastic support hose, raising the legs when resting or sleeping, and avoiding standing for too long.

## **QUESTIONS**

1. What is the difference between a vascular disease and a peripheral vascular disease?
2. What is the function of your blood vessels? How about the function of each type of blood vessel?
3. What health teachings can you give to a patient with varicose veins? Give 3 answers.