

Avoid clogging up blood circulation ✓

GOOD LIVING

BY SOLOMON KARANJA

Four eating habits were to be a subject of heavenly scrutiny, the angels wouldn't help wondering what man is up to. Humans, it seems, are on the verge of making synthetic food from petroleum! Beasts of the wild are roaming freely and adapting recklessly. A recent TV documentary showing baboons and chimpanzees feasting on a gazelle only served to highlight the level of destruction in the forest to the extent that these ants, nut, root and fruits eating animals have turned into grassland hunters. And they seem to be giving the carnivorous cats a run for their game meat.

Since this is a millennium of changes, it appears eating habits will have to conform to changing circumstances. We must take care not to fall into the trap of adopting strange, unsuitable and unsustainable eating habits. Diet does not have to be one of the great evils of civilisation.

Take the example of blood, which has the capacity to clot spontaneously. Thrombosis (clotting) occurs in vessels and is caused by arteriosclerosis (the hardening of walls of blood vessels), saturated fats, salt, toxins and waste materials in blood, tobacco and lack of physical exercise. Spontaneous clotting of blood in the vessels could be serious, be it in an artery or a vein. If in an artery, it causes deprivation of oxygen and nutrients in the part of the body beyond it. The limb could pale, swell and become painful.

Thrombosis could trigger a heart attack if it affects the heart and cause stroke if it attacks the carotid artery or any of its branches.

Occurring in veins such as in deep venous thrombosis (DVT) could be fatal, especially if the clot dislodges and forms an emboli. Some foods play a significant role in preventing the formation of clots in the

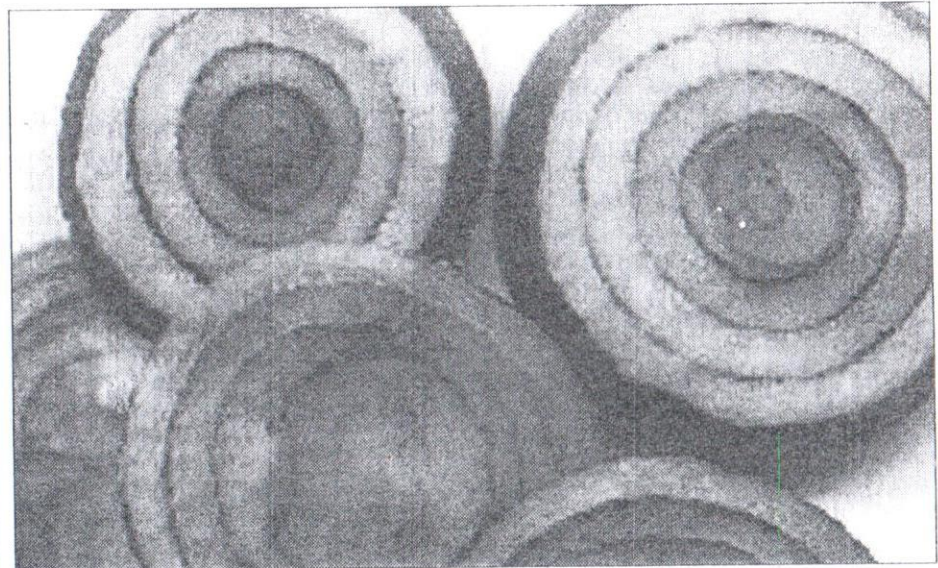


body. For instance, in 1995 Wilcox experimentally demonstrated that genistein found in soy prevents the formation of clots in the arteries, thus inhibiting the formation of thrombin (the substance that initiates the coagulation process) and platelet stickiness. Thrombosis in the cerebral arteries results in stroke.

It is becoming increasingly evident though that onions, well prepared, prevent thrombosis and improve circulation in coronary arteries.

Onions and apples are rich in quercetin and thus reduce the risk of those recovering from heart attack having a relapse.

Grapes and grape juice are regularly indicated for those with arteriosclerosis, regardless of the part of the body it has affected,



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and coronary arteries.

A loss of circulation in the lower extremities can be caused by iliac-femoral arteriosclerosis. Carotid arteriosclerosis affects the brain and could result in a stroke as well. Paradoxically, even though proven, eating avocados that contain significant amounts of mono unsaturated fatty acids actually reduces the blood's fat levels. This was shown in 1992 by scientists at Morelia General Hospital in Mexico, but the reasons are yet to be elucidated. It is thought to be due to their high levels of potassium and extremely low levels of sodium. This makes avocados highly recommended for hypertensives but not for weight watchers due to their high calorific value. Guavas have been known to significantly reduce triglyceride levels and blood cholesterol levels, thus lowering hypertension.

While reduction of saturated fats and

excess salt helps, consumption of omega-3 fatty acids found in fish has to be increased as they make the platelets less sticky, thus preventing clots. Omega-3 fatty acids are found in oily fish such as trout. Consuming fish two to three times a week has been found to be very healthy. For those who love their beer, moderate alcohol consumption lowers the risk of thrombosis by dilating the small blood vessels.

Time is opportune for us to adapt to those food items that will alleviate and minimise the risk of blood defects such as clotting, which, as it were, results in heart attacks and stroke. Our aging population that has steadfastly watched over our affairs and helped us through the lean times needs assurance that it is safe from the consequence of aging by eating right.

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