# Dietary choices for cardiovascular health: Insights from Dr Oscar Merino



A renowned vascular surgeon has emphasised the role of certain foods in preventing serious cardiovascular issues, including life-threatening heart attacks and circulation problems. Dr Oscar Merino, an expert in conditions affecting arteries, veins, and lymphatic vessels, has shared insights on dietary habits that can significantly enhance heart health.

Dr Merino’s expertise is vital in addressing circulatory complications such as thrombosis, aneurysms, and peripheral arterial disease. He advocates for a comprehensive approach to heart health that involves steering clear of major vascular risk factors, including smoking, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, and high cholesterol levels.

Central to his dietary recommendations is adherence to the Mediterranean diet, which prioritises the consumption of fruits and vegetables known for their high content of antioxidants, fibre, and essential vitamins that support arterial health. Speaking to Ultimahora, Dr Merino stated, “The paradigm of a healthy diet is the Mediterranean diet, where we prioritise consuming fruits and vegetables because they are rich in antioxidants, fibre, and vitamins that protect the arteries.” He encourages the inclusion of whole grains in one’s diet, explaining their role in cholesterol reduction, particularly through foods such as whole grain cereals, bread, and pasta.

Dr Merino identifies three specific foods as pivotal for heart health, with a focus on healthy fats. Avocados, olive oil, and nuts are highlighted as excellent sources of beneficial nutrients. He explains that avocado oil, rich in monounsaturated fats, offers positive effects on heart health, while olive oil's association with the Mediterranean diet further underscores its recognised health benefits. Nuts, particularly walnut oil, also contribute essential nutrients, although they lack the fibre that whole nuts provide.

Further emphasising the importance of lifestyle choices, Dr Merino notes that physical activity and weight management are crucial for maintaining vascular health. “Exercises such as walking, swimming, or cycling significantly improve circulation,” he noted, adding that “overweight and obesity are linked to a higher predisposition to both arterial and venous vascular diseases.” On the topic of smoking, he stated, “Smoking damages the arteries and greatly promotes the formation of calcium and cholesterol plaques leading to arteriosclerosis with all its complications.” He advises regular medical check-ups, especially for individuals identifying any vascular risk factors.

Varicose veins, a common circulatory concern, were also discussed by Dr Merino. He explained that they occur when veins, particularly in the legs, become dilated and tortuous due to malfunctioning valves meant to facilitate blood return to the heart. Symptoms of varicose veins can arise from various factors, including genetics, a sedentary lifestyle, overweight, and hormonal changes. To mitigate these issues, Dr Merino recommends activating calf muscles to assist blood flow, especially endorsing walking as beneficial for arterial health. He detailed that “walking increases the demand for blood flow in the legs, and this stimulates the appearance of collateral circulation,” which can often substitute for compromised main vessels.

Attention was also given to the relationship between blood circulation and hair health, with Dr Merino asserting that “good blood flow to the scalp ensures that hair follicles receive the nutrients and oxygen necessary to produce strong, healthy hair.” To combat hair loss, he advises scalp massages, regular exercise, and maintaining a balanced diet rich in iron, biotin, and zinc while managing stress levels.

Additionally, Dr Merino addressed recent studies suggesting that tattoos may impact the lymphatic system. He noted, “It appears that during the tattooing process, some of the ink particles don’t remain exclusively in the area of skin being treated but can be transported by the lymphatic vessels to the lymph nodes, where they accumulate chronically.” While some experts raise concerns about the potential for chronic inflammation, others suggest that the presence of ink in the lymph nodes may not significantly affect their function or pose serious health risks. As he concludes, further extensive scientific research is required to clarify these health implications.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://clinicsoncall.com/en/doctors/dr-oscar-merino/> - This URL supports Dr. Óscar Merino's professional background as a vascular surgeon. It provides details about his work and expertise in treating circulatory complications.
2. <https://www.instagram.com/dromerino/> - This URL highlights Dr. Óscar Merino's efforts in sharing health information and tips related to vascular health, aligning with his advocacy for preventive measures.
3. <https://www.elespanol.com/ciencia/nutricion/20250415/oscar-merino-cirujano-vascular-desvela-unico-pan-debes-tomar-espana-ayuda-reducir-colesterol/1003743714564_0.html> - This article supports Dr. Merino's emphasis on dietary choices for heart health, particularly the Mediterranean diet and whole grains. It also mentions the importance of avoiding harmful factors like smoking.
4. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK493188/> - This link to a scientific resource supports the general understanding of how diet and lifestyle influence cardiovascular health, aligning with Dr. Merino's recommendations.
5. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/varicose-veins/symptoms-causes/syc-20378943> - This Mayo Clinic page corroborates Dr. Merino's explanation of varicose veins, their causes, and risk factors, which include genetics and lifestyle choices.
6. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/heart-health/why-you-shouldnt-smoke> - This Harvard Health Publishing article supports Dr. Merino's assertion that smoking significantly damages arteries and contributes to cardiovascular issues.
7. <https://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/health/vascular-surgeon-says-3-supermarket-31430229> - Please view link - unable to able to access data