

## Saunas Improve Results for Heart Patients

by author Patricia Palmer



For centuries, people have enjoyed saunas to sweat their way to health, but the extreme heat of traditional saunas was never considered safe for heart patients because they make the heart work harder to cool the body. Now scientists have discovered that one type of sauna is not only safe, but also vital to turn around the health of the most serious, end-stage heart patients.

Over the past decade, Japanese scientists have experimented with heart patients using saunas heated with far infrared (FIR) light, and they've had surprising success. These saunas emit rays from the infrared, healing portion of the light spectrum. Also called radiant heat, far infrared light heats objects directly without

increasing temperature of the air in between. This healing light is so safe that it is used to warm incubators for premature babies.

In this groundbreaking research, blood flow in 34 end-stage heart patients improved following daily 15-minute sessions in a 140°F (60°C) infrared sauna. The study, reported in May 1995 *Circulation*, suggested that heat-induced vasodilation has beneficial effects even for patients with severe heart failure.

While the extreme heat of a regular sauna might have led to a worsening of their condition, the infrared sauna works differently. It creates perspiration at a lower and safer temperature, as low as 110 to 120°F (45 to 50°C, or a hot day in Mexico) as compared to a scorching 160 to 200°F (75 to 95°C, or nearly boiling water) in traditional electric or wood saunas.

Even though the temperature is lower and the surrounding air easier to breathe, people sweat twice as much in an infrared sauna. Their sweat carries nasty toxins out of subcutaneous fat cells and deposits it directly onto the skin. Sweating is known to help rid the body of toxins of all kinds, including heavy metals such as mercury, cadmium, and lead, as well as plasticizers, pesticides, and dioxins. In her recent book *Detoxify or Die* (Prestige Publishers; December 2002), Dr. Sherry A. Rogers explains simply that the FIR sauna literally saves lives by ridding the body of chemicals that are the underlying causes of disease.

In addition to cleansing, infrared energy has been shown to improve lymph function, decrease joint stiffness, relieve muscle spasms, and lead to pain relief through increased blood flow. The Japanese heart studies showed results in three weeks. Dr. Rogers recommends a full detoxification program for adults that includes three or more sauna sessions per week over a year or two. A continuing program of one sauna a week for a regular sweat-cleanse can keep a body healthier for life.

### Sauna Protocol

Anyone using prescription drugs should check with their physician or pharmacist for possible changes in the drug's effect when infrared saunas are used.

Pregnant women should not use the sauna.

Those with swollen joints or surgical implants, including silicon breast implants, may not respond favourably.

For people who are seriously ill, sauna sessions should be short - 10 minutes at first, slowly building to half an hour or even an hour.

Replace nutrients that are sweated out, including magnesium, potassium, sodium, and calcium, found packaged as tri-salts or electrolytes at your health food store.

Drink lots of water.

Take vitamin C before and after the sauna to help with detoxification.

An activated charcoal or fibre supplement like psyllium after the sauna may capture toxins released into bloodstream and speed transit time through the intestinal tract.

*Patricia Palmer is a professional writer on the topics of natural health and wellness. She lives in Burnaby, BC.*

PRINT THIS PAGE  CLOSE  BACK TO THE TOP 