

Vascular Surgeon/Surgery Fact Sheet

Why is vascular health newsworthy?

- There are expected to be considerably more cases. Vascular disease primarily affects seniors, and as the U.S. population rates for seniors increases with aging baby boomers, the potential for vascular disease increases. In 2005, the U.S. Census reported there were more than 67 million people aged 55 and older. It anticipates that number to rise to more than 87 million in 2015. With this increase in potential vascular disease cases, knowledge of all treatments will become even more critical to your senior readership and their families.
- Peripheral arterial disease affects more than 8 million people in the U.S., especially those over 50, African Americans, and Hispanics. In advanced cases, when the diagnosis is made late, amputation may be necessary, particularly among diabetics.
- Nearly 200,000 people in the U.S. are diagnosed with abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) annually, and approximately 10,000 die each year from a ruptured AAA.
- Vascular disease can block the carotid arteries to the brain and cause paralyzing strokes. Stroke remains the third leading cause of death in the U. S. with nearly 157,000 people dying annually. A large proportion of strokes are caused by plaque in the carotid arteries. In 2006 it was estimated that Americans would pay about \$57.9 billion for stroke-related medical costs and disability.

Who is a vascular surgeon?

Vascular surgeons treat the all veins and arteries making up the entire vascular system, except the cranium and the heart. Today's vascular surgeons are the only medical discipline trained to care for patients using every vascular treatment available including noninvasive diagnostic tests, medical treatments, minimally invasive procedures, and open surgeries when necessary. This expertise uniquely qualifies vascular surgeons to make the most accurate diagnosis and prescribe the best treatment for the best outcome. Some other disciplines perform less invasive treatments, but cannot perform surgery. Others are skilled with one organ, but they are not specialists in the entire vascular system.

In addition to this clinical expertise, SVS members advocate for vascular health in other areas.

- Many are leaders who have developed unprecedented advancements through research.
- Others head vascular departments at medical colleges.
- Some work with legislators to make vascular healthcare available to all. An example of a legislative success is the passage of the Screening Abdominal Aortic Aneurysms Very Efficiently Act (SAAAVE) providing a free AAA screening for qualifying Medicare beneficiaries.

What is the SVS?

The Society for Vascular Surgery (SVS) is an organization of 2,400 vascular surgeons who specialize in vascular health. Founded in 1947, the SVS provides continuing medical education for vascular surgeons and advocates nationally on behalf of vascular patients. The SVS' charitable foundation, the American Vascular Association, promotes vascular disease research and supports career development for young vascular researchers.

How can media stay informed and contact a vascular surgeon?

- Press releases are distributed via email reporting the most recent research, breaking political news, and general vascular health information.
- The SVS website, VascularWeb.org, offers comprehensive media news and a wealth of information on vascular disease including disease descriptions and treatments in the patient section.
- SVS membership meets annually at the 2008 Vascular Annual Meeting (June 5 – 8 in San Diego) where selected members present groundbreaking research and studies. The media is invited to attend the meeting. A meeting of the World Federation of Vascular Societies proceeds the conference on June 4.
- For expert comments and interviews from vascular surgeons contact Jill Goodwin, director of communications, SVS, 312-202-5608 or jgoodwin@vascularsociety.org.



Your Blood's Amazing Trip through Your Vascular System

Your vascular system is made up of vessels that carry your blood throughout your body. Arteries carry oxygen-rich blood away from your heart. Veins carry oxygen-poor blood back to your heart. Your blood leaves the left side of the heart and is pumped out to the rest of your body.

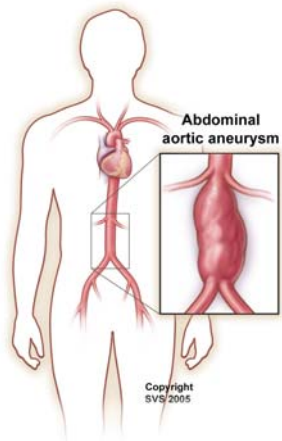
The main artery from your heart is called the aorta. As your blood travels throughout your body, it enters smaller and smaller blood vessels, reaching every cell, dropping off nutrients and picking up waste products and carbon dioxide. Your blood then starts the trip back in your veins, entering larger and larger ones as it goes, passing through your kidneys and liver on the way to drop off waste products. The blood eventually arrives back at the right side of your heart to start the trip all over again.

As we age, our arteries tend to thicken, get stiffer, and narrow. This is called arteriosclerosis. A form of arteriosclerosis is atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis is the build-up of plaque and cholesterol in large-and-medium-sized arteries. A narrowing of the arteries from the build-up of plaque can lead to coronary heart disease, and can cause a heart attack when this occurs in the blood vessels leading to the heart. The same situation in the arteries leading to the brain can cause strokes. Narrowing of the arteries in other places, such as your legs, can cause what is called Peripheral Arterial Disease or PAD. PAD can lead to sores, pain with walking, or amputation. When the smaller arteries are affected it is called arteriolosclerosis.

To learn more about your vascular health visit www.VascularWeb.org.

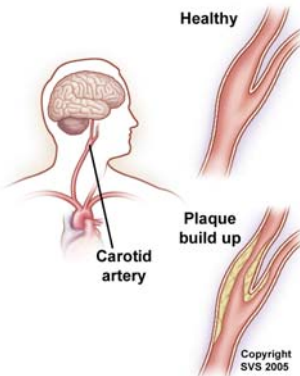
What is Vascular Disease?

Most Americans are familiar with heart disease and with the consequences of blockages in the vessels that carry blood to and from the heart. But few people realize that blockages caused by a buildup of plaque and cholesterol affect more than coronary arteries. Arteries throughout the body carry oxygen-rich blood away from the heart, so blockages can occur in all arteries with serious effects. Three of the most recognized vascular diseases include:



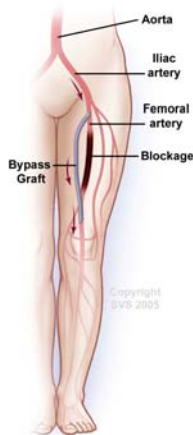
Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) is an enlargement or “bulge” that develops in a weakened area within the largest artery in the abdomen. The pressure generated by each heartbeat pushes against the weakened aortic wall, causing the aneurysm to enlarge. If the AAA remains undetected, the aortic wall continues to weaken, and the aneurysm continues to grow. Eventually, the aneurysm becomes so large, and its wall so weak, that rupture occurs. When this happens there is massive internal bleeding, a situation that is usually fatal. The only way to break this cycle is to find the AAA before it ruptures.



Carotid Artery Disease - Stroke

Carotid arteries occur when the main blood vessels to the brain develop a buildup of plaque caused by atherosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries. When the buildup becomes very severe, it can cause a stroke. A stroke occurs when part of the brain is damaged by these vascular problems; in fact, 80 percent of strokes are “ischemic strokes” where part of the circulation to the brain is cut off, usually due to blockages in the carotid arteries. The process is similar to the buildup of plaque in arteries in the heart that causes heart attacks. Strokes are the third leading cause of death in the U.S. according to the National Center for Health Statistics.



Peripheral Arterial Disease

Peripheral arterial disease (PAD) occurs when atherosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries, causes a buildup of plaque in the blood vessels that carry oxygen and nutrients to all the tissues of the body. As these plaques worsen, they reduce essential blood flow to the limbs and can even cause complete blockages of the arteries. Early on, PAD may only cause difficulty walking, but in its most severe forms, it can cause painful foot ulcers, infections, and even gangrene, which could require amputation. People with PAD are three times more likely to die of heart attacks or strokes than those without PAD.

To learn more about AAA, Carotid Artery, and Peripheral Arterial diseases visit www.VascularWeb.org or contact Jill Goodwin, director of communications, SVS, 312-202-5608 or jgoodwin@vascularsociety.org.

Vascular Health Speakers/Spokespersons Bureau

Media Questions

The Vascular Health Speakers/Spokespersons Bureau is your news source on the topics of vascular disease and prevention. Members of the Society for Vascular Surgery (SVS), these physicians and researchers are available for interviews; medical expertise; comments on political aspects of vascular healthcare; and answering general questions about the vascular system. The Vascular Health Speakers/Spokespersons Bureau is qualified to discuss all topics on vascular health including:

Vascular Disease Prevention/Screening
What is Your Vascular Profile?
Risk Factor Management
Stroke Screening for Stroke Prevention

Disease Expertise
Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA)
Carotid Disease (stroke)
Peripheral Arterial Disease
Venous Disease
Thoracic Aneurysm
All Other Vascular Diseases

Diabetic Patients
Diabetic Vascular Disease
Natural History
Diabetic Foot Problems
Steal Syndrome

Minimally invasive vascular surgery including Thoracic, Abdominal, Carotid, Peripheral Vascular and Endovascular Surgery
Balloon Angioplasty
Carotid Stenting
Carotid Angioplasty
Non-invasive Testing and Graft Surveillance
Percutaneous Peripheral Vascular Surgery
Iliac Stenting
Carotid Endarterectomy Under Regional Anesthesia
Ischemic Complications of Endograft Repair of AAA

Political issues related to vascular disease
Medicare screening
All vascular-related legislation

Story Ideas

The field of vascular healthcare is probably the most dynamic discipline in medicine today. The combination of a growing senior population that is more likely to experience vascular disease and the development of innovative medical technology combine to make vascular health an important story. A few interesting story topics are:

Vascular Disease and Ethnicity

- Lower AAA rate in African Americans
- Amputation rate and stroke rate higher in African Americans compared to the general population

Vascular Research/Breakthroughs

- Open surgical procedures vs. endovascular interventions
- High risk patients for carotid endarterectomy: an illusion to justify carotid artery stenting

Socioeconomic Aspects of Vascular Healthcare

- Medicare recipients are eligible for free AAA screenings beginning January 2007
- Free screenings offered through SVS foundation, American Vascular Society
- Vascular diseases in competitive athletes

To speak with a vascular surgeon contact:

Jill Goodwin, director of communications
Phone: 312-202-5608
E-mail: jgoodwin@vascularsociety.org
www.VascularWeb.org