

# Facts about Peripheral Arterial Disease and Screening



*Your Vascular Health is a matter of life and limb*

**Please call with any questions:**

## Why should I be screened?

It isn't only accidents and wars that result in amputations. Peripheral arterial disease (PAD) can lead to loss of a leg. In fact, each year tens of thousands of Americans lose a leg due to severe PAD. PAD is caused by a build up of plaque in peripheral arteries, making them narrow or obstructed, and limits the blood flow, particularly in the legs.

- PAD affects more than eight million people in the United States, especially those over 50.
- African Americans and Hispanics are at particular risk of PAD.
- Diabetic patients with PAD are also at significantly increased risk of limb amputation due to PAD.
- One in every 20 Americans over the age of 50 has PAD.
- Individuals with PAD suffer a five-fold increased relative risk of a cardiovascular ischemic event and total mortality that is two-to-three fold greater than those without PAD.

## What is PAD?

Your peripheral arteries carry oxygen-rich blood away from your heart to your arms and legs. Healthy peripheral arteries are smooth and unobstructed, allowing blood to flow freely to your legs, and provide oxygen, glucose, and other nutrients that your legs need. Typically with age, the peripheral arteries build up plaque, a sticky substance made up mostly of fat and cholesterol. Plaque narrows the passageway within the arteries and causes them to become stiff and blocked.

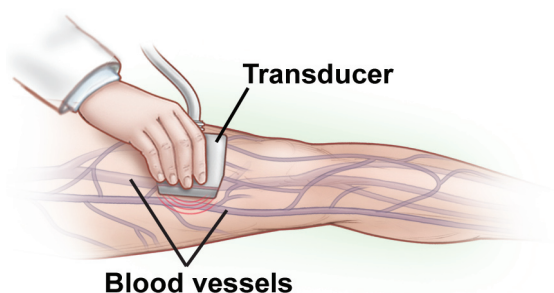
PAD results when the peripheral arteries become too narrow or obstructed and limit the blood flow to your legs. If left untreated, PAD can cause pain or aching in your legs with walking, resting pain in your foot at night in bed, non-healing sores or infections in your toes or feet, and can lead to gangrene and limb loss in its most severe form. In addition, it can be associated with other serious arterial conditions leading to heart attacks and stroke.

For more information visit [VascularWeb.org](http://VascularWeb.org)

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## How do you screen for PAD?

A simple screening exam, called an ankle-brachial index, can accurately detect PAD in most cases. This test takes only a few minutes, is highly accurate, and is completely painless and noninvasive



## Risk Factors

- Aging
- Males are more prone to PAD
- Diabetes
- Smoking
- High cholesterol
- Obesity
- Lack of exercise
- Family history of vascular problems

## Symptoms of PAD

There may be no symptoms in the early stages of PAD. Developing symptoms may include discomfort or pain in your legs when walking with the pain going away when you stop and rest.

Vascular surgeons pioneered the development of noninvasive methods for accurately diagnosing PAD, and are the only specialists treating vascular disease today who can perform all treatment options available, including medical management, minimally invasive endovascular angioplasty and stent procedures, and open bypass surgery. Only when you see a vascular surgeon who offers all treatment modalities will you be assured of receiving the care that is most appropriate to your condition.

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