

Stay in Circulation

Facts About Peripheral Arterial Disease (P.A.D.)

A National Public Awareness Campaign from the P.A.D. Coalition and
the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
National Institutes of Health
National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

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Take Steps to Learn About P.A.D.



What is P.A.D.?

- Peripheral Arterial Disease (P.A.D.) is a common yet serious disease.
- P.A.D. occurs when extra cholesterol and fat circulating in the blood collects in the walls of the arteries that supply blood to your limbs.
- P.A.D. can affect your quality of life, make walking difficult, or worse, increase your risk of heart attack, stroke, leg amputation, and even death.



Why should you learn about P.A.D.?

- P.A.D. affects 8 to 12 million people within the U.S., *especially those over age 50.*
- Early diagnosis and treatment of P.A.D. can help to...
 - Prevent disability and restore your mobility
 - Stop the disease from progressing
 - Lower your risk for heart attack, heart disease, and stroke



How do you know if you have P.A.D.?

- Most people with P.A.D. do not have the typical signs and symptoms of the disease.
- People who do experience symptoms often fail to report them because they think they are a natural part of aging.



What are the signs and symptoms of P.A.D.?

- **Claudication**—fatigue, heaviness, tiredness, cramping in the leg muscles (buttocks, thigh, or calf) that occurs during activities such as walking or climbing stairs
- The pain or discomfort goes away once the activity is stopped or during rest.



More signs and symptoms of P.A.D.

- Cramping or pain in the legs and/or feet at rest that often disturbs sleep
- Sores or wounds on toes, feet, or legs that heal slowly, poorly, or not at all
- Color changes in the skin of the feet, including paleness or blueness
- A lower temperature in one leg compared to the other leg
- Poor nail growth and decreased hair growth on toes and legs



What causes P.A.D.?

- Plaque builds up on artery walls, blocking flow of blood to the arteries of the limbs, often the legs.
- The cause of plaque buildup is unknown in most cases.
- However, there are some conditions and habits that raise your chance of developing P.A.D.



Are you at risk for P.A.D.?

- Are you over age 50?
- Do you smoke or used to smoke?
- Do you have diabetes?
- Do you have high blood pressure?
- Do you have high blood cholesterol?
- Do you have a personal history of vascular disease, heart attack, or stroke?
- Are you African American?



At risk for P.A.D.? Then...

- Discuss this concern with your health care provider.
- Ask your health care provider if you should be screened or tested for P.A.D.



Think you may be at risk? Ask your health care provider...

- Does my medical history put me at higher risk for P.A.D.?
- Which screening tests or exams are right for me?
- If I have P.A.D., what steps should I take to treat it?
- Will P.A.D. increase my risk for other conditions?



More questions for your health care provider...

- What is my blood sugar level? If I have diabetes, what should I do about it?
- What is my blood pressure? Do I need to do anything about it?
- What are my cholesterol numbers? Do I need to do anything about them?
- What can I do to quit smoking?



How is P.A.D. diagnosed?

- Medical and family history
- Physical exam
- Painless, easy, inexpensive screening
 - Ankle-brachial index (ABI)
 - Doppler ultrasound
 - Others



How is P.A.D. treated?

- Three approaches for treating P.A.D.:
 - Lifestyle changes
 - Taking medication
 - In some cases, special procedure or surgery
- The overall goal of treatment is to...
 - Reduce symptoms
 - Improve quality of life and mobility
 - Prevent heart attack, stroke, and amputation



How can I reduce my risk for P.A.D.?

- Don't smoke/quit smoking.
- If you have diabetes, high blood pressure, and/or high cholesterol, talk to your health care provider about how to manage your condition.
- Eat a healthy diet full of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Be active for 30 minutes a day.



To Learn More about P.A.D. Visit:

- Stay in Circulation
www.aboutpad.org
- NHLBI Diseases and Conditions Index
www.nlm.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/pad/pad_what.html
- NHLBI Health Information Center
Phone: 301-592-8573
Fax: 240-629-3255
www.nlm.nih.gov/health/infoctr
- P.A.D. Coalition
www.PADCoalition.org



Stay in Circulation: Take Steps to Learn About P.A.D. is a national awareness campaign to increase public and health care provider awareness about peripheral arterial disease (P.A.D.) and its association with other cardiovascular diseases.

The campaign is sponsored by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute—part of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—in cooperation with the P.A.D. Coalition, an alliance of national organizations and professional societies concerned with raising awareness about P.A.D.