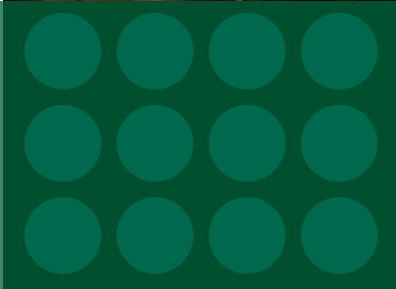


RECOGNIZING AND UNDERSTANDING THE RISK

Your guide to poor leg circulation and increased risk of heart attack and stroke



Three steps that could help reduce your risk of heart attack or stroke.

Step 1: Find out about Peripheral Artery Disease (P.A.D.).

P.A.D., often defined as poor circulation in the legs, is a serious condition that more than doubles your risk of a heart attack or stroke. It's a problem with blood flow in the arteries. Plaque—made up of cholesterol and other materials—builds up on the walls of arteries, restricting blood flow, and it can actually rupture. This rupture may lead to the formation of clots. P.A.D. is a sign that you may be at an increased risk of having a clot in your heart or brain as well.

Step 2: If you have risk factors, get tested today.

Are you over 50 with high blood pressure or high cholesterol? If so, these are just some factors that put you at risk for P.A.D. You may not notice any warning signs—most people don't, but you may have pain or heaviness in your legs. By the time you actually feel any pain in your legs, your arteries may be significantly blocked. So don't wait. Talk to your doctor about tests for P.A.D., like the Ankle-Brachial Index (A.B.I.).

Step 3: Talk to your doctor about your treatment options.

If you're diagnosed with P.A.D., take the next step and talk with your doctor about your treatment options. Even if you're taking blood pressure or cholesterol medicines to help reduce your overall cardiovascular risk, there may be more you can do to help reduce your risk of heart attack or stroke. Your doctor may recommend a medicine that is designed specifically to help keep platelets in the blood from sticking together and forming clots, which are the main cause of most heart attacks and strokes.



See how P.A.D. increases your risk of heart attack or stroke.

What makes P.A.D. so serious? All arteries are connected. If you have poor circulation in your legs you may also have poor circulation in your heart or in your brain. If blood flow to your brain is blocked, it could mean a stroke; if blood flow to your heart is blocked, it could mean a heart attack. **P.A.D. is a serious warning sign that your risk for heart attack or stroke may have doubled.**

See how P.A.D. can affect your arteries.

Fig. 1 Inside a healthy artery. Healthy artery walls are smooth and flexible, allowing oxygen-rich blood to flow easily to the heart, brain, and legs.

Fig. 2 Plaque builds up. Over time, a substance called plaque can collect along the walls of your arteries. This narrows and hardens the arteries and reduces blood flow. (Plaque is a buildup of cholesterol and other materials in the walls of your arteries.)

Fig. 3 Plaque ruptures and platelets stick together. As blood flows through the narrowed artery, the plaque can rupture. This causes platelets in the blood to stick to the damaged area by clumping together and forming a clot.

Fig. 4 Clot forms and obstructs blood flow. A clot can reduce or block the flow of blood through an artery. If this happens in an artery that supplies blood to the heart, the result can be a heart attack. If this happens in an artery supplying blood to the brain, it can result in a stroke. If you have P.A.D., this may be happening in your legs.

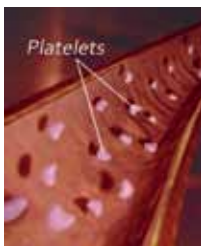


Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

**P.A.D.
fact:**

You may not feel any symptoms of P.A.D., so the only way to know for sure is to be tested.



Know the risk factors and symptoms of P.A.D.

8 million people have Peripheral Artery Disease (P.A.D.).

Read on and find out if you're at risk.

Talk to your doctor if you have even ONE of these risk factors*

- You are over 50 and:
 - Have high blood pressure
 - Have high cholesterol
 - Have a family history of heart attack or stroke
 - Have diabetes
 - Smoke or used to smoke
- You are over 70
- Pain in your legs while walking that eases after rest, or pain in your legs at rest

Don't wait for symptoms.

The symptoms of P.A.D. include pain, cramps, and a tired feeling or heaviness in your calves, thighs, or buttocks when you exercise—even while just walking a short distance. Another sign is that the pain or discomfort most likely eases after rest. These symptoms are the easiest to recognize.

If you do have symptoms of P.A.D., don't dismiss any of them as a natural part of aging. Think of them as danger signs. It's an alarming fact, but if you have P.A.D., your risk of a heart attack or stroke increases.

The trouble is, many people don't have symptoms. In fact, only about one third feel any pain or discomfort. That's why it's so important to get tested. By the time you actually feel pain in your legs, the arteries in your legs may be over 60% blocked.

** There are other risk factors. Talk to your doctor.*



Getting tested is fast and easy.

Get tested for P.A.D.

You may not have any symptoms of P.A.D., but you still may be at risk for a heart attack or stroke. That's why it's important to get tested now.

If you're over 50 and have diabetes, smoke, or used to smoke, it's especially important to get tested for P.A.D. because you're at high risk for P.A.D.

Talk to your doctor about the A.B.I.

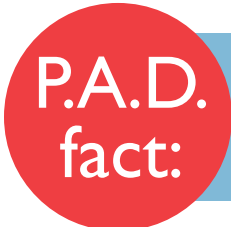
One simple test that doctors often use to diagnose P.A.D. is called the Ankle-Brachial Index (A.B.I.). It's a lot like having your blood pressure taken, except that you have a cuff on both your arm and your ankle. The A.B.I. compares blood pressure readings from those areas of your body. The whole test takes a few minutes.

The A.B.I. can be an important tool for doctors. It helps them diagnose P.A.D. in many patients who don't have any symptoms, but who are at a high risk for a heart attack or stroke. In fact, nearly half the cases of P.A.D. may be overlooked if based on symptoms alone. The A.B.I. has also been recommended to help diagnose P.A.D. in people who have other risk factors, such as diabetes.

There are other tests available to diagnose P.A.D. Your doctor may use scanning or imaging tests or he or she may give you a physical examination. It's important to talk to your doctor about testing for P.A.D. today.



The A.B.I. test is as simple as taking your blood pressure.



60% of people with P.A.D. have blockages in arteries near their heart or brain as well as in the legs.

If you're diagnosed with P.A.D., talk to your doctor about your options.

If your doctor diagnoses you with P.A.D., your next step will be to discuss the best plan of action. Your doctor may prescribe a treatment for your leg pain, but you may also need a separate treatment to help lower your risk of heart attack or stroke. Together, you and your doctor can decide on a treatment plan that's right for you.

Even if you're already treating high blood pressure and high cholesterol to reduce your cardiovascular risk, medical guidelines recommend P.A.D. patients get therapy to help reduce clot formation in addition to their other risk-reducing medications.

If you have P.A.D., your doctor may prescribe the following medications:

- Medications to help reduce clot formation
- Medications to help lower blood pressure by lowering blood volume or by expanding or relaxing the walls of blood vessels
- Medications to help lower cholesterol by slowing the buildup of plaque and limiting the production of new cholesterol
- Medications for diabetes to manage blood glucose levels, which helps reduce damage to organs, blood vessels, and nerves
- Medications for leg pain as a symptom of P.A.D.

Talk to your doctor about a treatment option to further reduce your risk.

Simple everyday changes can be part of your treatment.

Even if your doctor recommends a treatment option to help reduce your risk of heart attack or stroke, he or she may ask you to make some lifestyle changes that could help increase your protection.

Lose at least a few pounds. You could gain a lot.

Did you know that if you are overweight, losing even a small amount of weight may help improve your health? Work with your doctor, or with a nutritionist recommended by your doctor, to come up with a weight-loss program that can work for you.

Get around more.

Even if it's only a walk around the block. Talk to your doctor about a walking program that's right for you.

Exercise—even walking—benefits the muscles in your body, including your heart. It also reduces stress, lowers blood pressure, and burns calories.

Research has shown that regular workouts on a treadmill can help patients with P.A.D. function better and increase the distance they can walk pain-free—even for those who start off finding any walking difficult. Talk to your doctor before starting any exercise program.

And if you smoke—one more reason to quit.

Smoking is one of the highest risks for P.A.D., as it is for heart attack and stroke. And if you do have P.A.D., smoking can cause your condition to rapidly get worse. This makes it more important than ever that you quit as soon as possible. But don't go it alone. Work with your doctor, who may suggest a smoking cessation program. And seek out counseling if you need extra support.



**P.A.D.
fact:**

By the time you actually feel pain in your legs, your arteries may already be blocked by more than 60%.



Now that you know about P.A.D., you know what to do.

Most people with poor circulation in their legs don't even know they have it—let alone that it may be caused by a serious disease called Peripheral Artery Disease (P.A.D.). But now you know more about P.A.D., so talk to your doctor.

Now is the time to download and review the risk assessment tool (Assessing Your Risk). You'll learn how some conditions may be putting you at more risk than you know. It will describe how they may make you more likely to have P.A.D. and what that means in terms of your risk of heart attack or stroke.

Make an appointment with your doctor today.

Inside the risk assessment tool, you'll find the key questions to ask your doctor. Bring it along with you on your appointment to help you have an informed discussion with your doctor.

Remember, your doctor is the single best source of information regarding you and your health. So consult your doctor if you have any questions about your health or your medicine.

Take the next step—get tested.

The end of this material is also a beginning. You've seen why poor circulation in the legs can be a lot more serious than it sounds. The next step is to find out if you should be tested for P.A.D.

If you are diagnosed, you'll also want to ask your doctor about treatment options to help reduce your risk of heart attack or stroke. Because if you have P.A.D., lowering your risk of heart attack or stroke is perhaps the most important thing you could do.



Words that can help you discuss your P.A.D.:

A.B.I. Test (Ankle-Brachial Index): This is an index that compares blood pressure in your lower legs to blood pressure in your arms. It's a simple test that can be done in your doctor's office and takes only a few minutes.

Antiplatelet Medication: These are medicines that help keep platelets from sticking together and forming clots.

Artery: A vessel that carries blood, oxygen, and nutrients from your heart through your body. It is part of the circulatory system.

Clots: Platelets and other materials in the blood that stick together and can block or restrict blood flow through your arteries.

Heart Attack: A serious event that occurs when the supply of blood to the heart is limited. In most cases, this is caused by blood clots that reduce the blood flow to the heart.

Peripheral Artery Disease (P.A.D.): P.A.D. is a condition in which the arteries of your legs, and sometimes your arms, begin to narrow from plaque, restricting the flow of oxygen-rich blood.

The symptoms of P.A.D. include pain, cramps, a tired feeling, or heaviness in your calves, thighs, or buttocks that occurs when you exercise—even walking just a short distance—that eases after rest. P.A.D. can be an indicator that you're at risk for a heart attack or stroke.

Plaque: A buildup of cholesterol and other materials in the walls of the arteries. Plaque can rupture, causing platelets in the blood to stick together and form clots.

Platelets: Microscopic particles within the blood that form clots to reduce bleeding when blood vessels are injured.

Stroke: A stroke occurs when blood flow through an artery that supplies blood to the brain is severely reduced or blocked. As a result, the brain is temporarily or permanently damaged. Most strokes are ischemic, meaning they result from a blockage, usually by a clot, in an artery to the brain. A hemorrhagic stroke occurs when a blood vessel ruptures, causing blood to leak into the brain.



**P.A.D.
fact:**

If you have P.A.D., your doctor may recommend more than one medication.



Resources.

Where to find more information on P.A.D.

P.A.D. Screening Locations: <http://www.padcoalition.org/screenings>

American Heart Association: <http://www.americanheart.org>

P.A.D. Coalition: <http://www.padcoalition.org>

P.A.D. Facts: <http://www.padfacts.com>

Stay in Circulation: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/pad/index.html>

Vascular Disease Foundation: <http://www.vdf.org/diseaseinfo/pad>