

Peripheral Arterial Disease

Body Part

Arteries supplying the legs

Condition:

Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD) also known as Peripheral Vascular Disease (PVD) is a common circulatory condition where the arteries do not supply enough blood to your peripheries, especially your legs and feet.

Summary

When you develop PAD the demand for oxygen from your muscles is not met. This is because of a blockage in your arteries caused by fat. These blockages are restricting the blood flow and thus oxygen to the muscles which cause a cramping sensation (claudication) at the site of the blockage which is only relieved through rest.

Risk factors to developing PAD

- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Increasing age, especially after reaching 50 years of age
- A family history of peripheral artery disease, heart disease or stroke

Symptoms:

- Painful cramping in one or both of your hips, thighs or calf muscles after certain activities, such as walking or climbing stairs (claudication)
- Leg numbness or weakness
- Coldness in your lower leg or foot, especially when compared with the other side
- Sores on your toes, feet or legs that won't heal
- A change in the color of your legs
- Hair loss or slower hair growth on your feet and legs
- Slower growth of your toenails
- Shiny skin on your legs
- No pulse or a weak pulse in your legs or feet

Treatment:

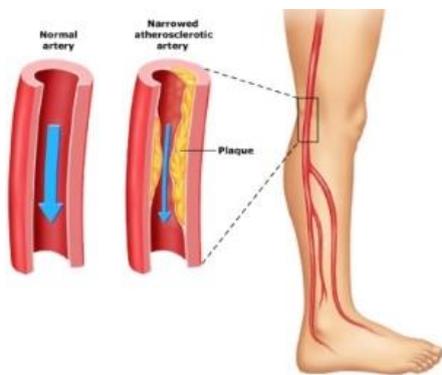
Prevention is better than cure. The best way to prevent PAD is to maintain a healthy lifestyle. That means:

- Quit smoking if you're a smoker.
- If you have diabetes, keep your blood sugar in good control.
- Exercise regularly after consulting with your GP
- Lower your cholesterol and blood pressure levels, if applicable.
- Eat foods that are low in saturated fat.
- Maintain a healthy weight.

People with PAD should be extra cautious of breaks in the skin, especially on their feet. Limited blood flow means wounds take longer to heal. If a break in the skin occurs and is left untreated you may develop an ulcer which could lead to gangrene and thus potential amputation. Proper foot care is vital in PAD.

- Wash your feet daily, dry them thoroughly and moisturize often to prevent cracks that can lead to infection. Don't moisturize between the toes, however, as this can encourage fungal growth.
- Wear well-fitting shoes and thick, dry socks.
- Promptly treat any fungal infections of the feet, such as athlete's foot.
- Take care when trimming your nails.
- Inspect your feet daily for injuries.
- Have your podiatrist treat nails, corns or calluses.
- See your podiatrist at the first sign of a sore or injury to your skin.

Your PAD should be treated in close conjunction with your GP. Apart from lifestyle changes to help treat PAD, medications will also be prescribed and in severe cases where medications don't work, surgery may be indicated.



Further information:

For further information, please contact our friendly team at Gen Health.

Picture Link: <https://emedpainmanagement.com/peripheral-vascular-disease/>

