

What is peripheral arterial disease (PAD)?

Peripheral artery disease (PAD) is a disease in which plaque builds up in the arteries that carry blood to your limbs. Arterial disease can also affect the head area and internal organs. Plaque is made up of fat, cholesterol, calcium, fibrous tissue, and other substances in the blood. The most common area where people experience PAD is in the legs, especially in the lower legs, ankles, and feet.

When plaque builds up in the body's arteries, the condition is called atherosclerosis. Over time, plaque can harden and narrow the arteries. This limits the flow of oxygen-rich blood to your organs and other parts of your body.

Blocked blood flow to your legs can cause pain and numbness. It also can raise your risk of getting an infection or prevent the healing of wounds in the affected limbs as the narrowed arteries have a hard time getting enough blood and oxygen to a wound site.

If severe enough, blocked blood flow can cause gangrene (tissue death). In very serious cases, this can lead to leg amputation.

If you have these symptoms, please check with your doctor and consider treatment with an interventional radiologist at ARA.

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★ Locations offering PAD treatment

Treating peripheral arterial disease (PAD) with interventional radiology



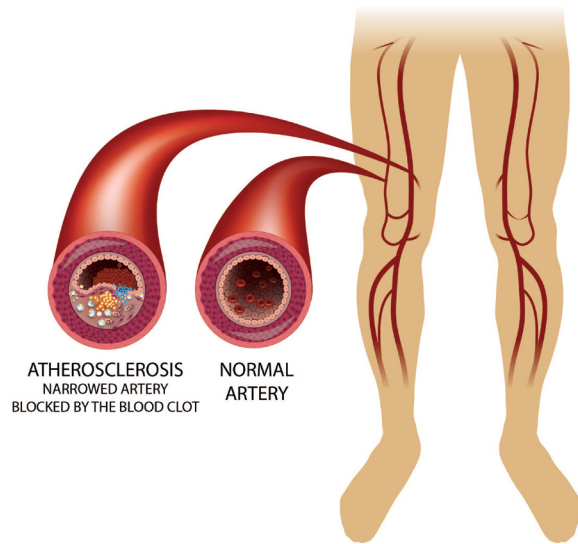
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Who is at risk for peripheral arterial disease (PAD)?

PAD affects millions of people in the United States. The major risk factors for PAD are smoking, diabetes, older age, and having certain diseases or conditions.

Smoking is the main risk factor for PAD and your risk increases if you smoke or have a history of smoking. Quitting smoking slows the progress of PAD. People who smoke and people who have diabetes are at highest risk for PAD complications, such as gangrene in the leg from decreased blood flow.

Older age is also a risk factor for PAD. Plaque builds up in your arteries as you age.

Several diseases and conditions can raise your risk of PAD, including:

- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- High blood cholesterol
- Coronary heart disease
- Stroke
- Metabolic syndrome

What are the symptoms of PAD?

Many people who have PAD don't have any signs or symptoms, so it is important that you are checked by a physician if you have any risk factors.

People who have PAD may have symptoms when walking or climbing stairs, including pain, numbness, aching, or heaviness in the leg muscles that eases after resting (intermittent claudication). Symptoms also may include cramping in the affected leg(s) and in the buttocks, thighs, calves, and feet.

Other signs and symptoms of PAD include:

- Weak or absent pulses in the legs or feet
- Wounds on the toes, feet, or legs that heal slowly, poorly, or not at all
- A pale or bluish color to the skin
- A lower temperature in one leg compared to the other leg
- Poor toenail growth and decreased leg hair growth
- Erectile dysfunction, especially in men with diabetes

PAD treatment with interventional radiology

Minimally invasive interventional radiology (IR) procedures at ARA are highly successful at getting rid of arterial plaque in PAD patients. IR procedures are targeted treatments that use radiology techniques (fluoroscopy, ultrasound, etc.) to guide small devices, such as catheters, through blood vessels or other pathways to treat diseases percutaneously (through the skin).

IR procedures offer benefits to patients in terms of risk, pain and recovery time, all of which are reduced by the specialty's minimally invasive nature. The cost tends to be lower than conventional surgery and advancements in imaging technology give radiologists high-quality anatomic detail during the procedure.

Your condition will most likely be evaluated first using CT, ultrasound, or MRI. If you are a good candidate for an IR procedure, our interventional consultants will assist you with preparation and insurance processes.

PAD is often treated with endovascular therapy, in which a catheter (a thin tube) is inserted with a guide wire into an artery, usually in the groin, and guided to the site of the blockage. At this point, several procedures are possible:

Atherectomy and angioplasty: A device is advanced over the wire to shave down the plaque (atherectomy) and a balloon is used to dilate and open up the artery (angioplasty).

Stenting the artery: Once the artery is cleared and a balloon has been used to expand it, small metal mesh tubes called stents can be placed to hold the artery open.

Procedure and recovery

IR procedures for PAD are done either in the ARA Midtown location or in radiology suites at several hospitals. The procedure takes 1.5 to 2.5 hours and the patient is required to remain at the site and lie flat afterward for 2 to 5 hours. The vast majority of patients are then allowed to go home.

Do you think you might have PAD?

Ask your doctor or call ARA directly to schedule a consultation at (512) 453-6100.

Take a survey on your PAD symptoms at ausrad.com/PAD.

