

WHAT IS PAD?

TRANSCRIPT

Peripheral artery disease, or PAD, means you have blockages in the arteries of your neck, legs, or arms. They are called peripheral arteries because they are outside the heart. Even if you don't feel any pain or symptoms, when you have PAD, your risk for heart attack and stroke nearly doubles. It is time to take PAD seriously.

Your peripheral arteries circulate oxygen-rich blood throughout your body. Blood flows easily through a healthy peripheral artery.

But, over time, cholesterol and other fatty deposits called plaque can build up on the artery wall. This narrowing of the arteries is called atherosclerosis.

The artery can become partially blocked reducing blood flow to parts of your body. Because it is more common to have blockages in your legs, if you have PAD you may notice leg pain, called claudication; fatigue; cramping; dry, scaly skin; poor hair growth, and slow healing wounds on your lower legs and feet.

If left untreated, the blockage can continue to build. Your peripheral arteries may narrow even further. A piece of plaque can break off of the blockage, travel down a vessel and get lodged in place, completely blocking the artery.

When oxygen-rich blood cannot get to a part of the body, damage occurs. This damage can cause serious complications, like amputation, and can even lead to heart attack and stroke.

"I've been fighting heart disease for approximately 15 years. I mean, I've been through a lot. And you know it hasn't been easy for me and my family. It's been a lot of stress on all of us."

You are more at risk for developing PAD if you are over 50; use tobacco, smoke, or used to smoke; have diabetes, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol; have a family history of heart attack or stroke; are overweight; or are African American.

PAD is serious. If you have PAD or are at risk for PAD, meet with your healthcare provider to develop a treatment plan. Following a treatment plan is the best way to prevent many of the long-term complications of PAD, including heart attack and stroke.