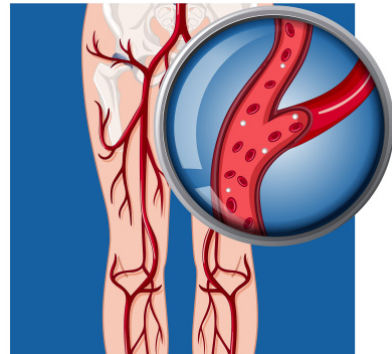


PERIPHERAL ARTERY DISEASE: KNOW YOUR RISK FACTORS

Meenal Balakrishnan, OMS, JD

Ronald Januchowski, DO, FACP, Editor • Paula Gregory, DO, MBA, CHCQM, FAIHQ, Health Literacy Editor



Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD) is caused by plaque build-up in the arteries bringing blood to your arms, legs, organs, and brain. The plaque is formed by cholesterol, fat, calcium, fibrous tissue, and other blood products. After damage to your arteries, the body begins to heal and the healing may cause plaque to form at the site of damage. The plaque hardens and narrows arteries. The plaque can also break off, further damaging the arteries and causing a blood clot to form at the site. Plaque or blood clots can limit the flow of oxygenated blood through the arteries to tissues. PAD can cause a variety of issues ranging from pain to skin changes.

WHAT ARE MY PAD RISK FACTORS?

The American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association (ACC/AHA) identified certain groups with an increased risk such as:

- Over 70 years
- Age 50 to 69 years with a history of smoking or diabetes
- Age 40 to 49 with diabetes and at least one other risk factor for atherosclerosis, including:
 - Male gender
 - Black ethnicity
 - Family history of atherosclerosis
 - Smoking
 - High cholesterol
 - High blood pressure
 - Homocysteinemia
- Abnormal lower extremity pulse examination
- Known atherosclerosis

HOW PAD IS DIAGNOSED

- If PAD is suspected, your doctor can diagnose PAD by comparing the blood pressures of a patient's ankles and arms and running different neurological and blood tests.

HOW TO PREVENT PAD

No organization currently recommends routine screening for PAD in a patient with NO symptoms, the USPSTF does recommend ways to reduce risk. The best way to avoid PAD is to limit the amount of arterial damage. This includes smoking cessation, a heart-healthy diet, medications, and blood pressure control.

SOURCE(S): UpToDate; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Medscape

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