

Fast Facts

Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD)

- Circulation to your limbs is reduced
- Result of buildup of fatty deposits (plaques) in your arteries, which restrict the area that your blood has to flow through (atherosclerosis). Most people associate this with problems related to heart (coronary) arteries, but it affects all of the arteries in your body
 - Several things can place you at a higher risk of developing it, such as, smoking, having diabetes, being obese, having high blood pressure, having high cholesterol, having a family history of circulatory problems and aging
- If you have it, you are at increased risk for having a stroke or heart attack due to the chance of the plaque having small pieces breaking off and traveling through your bloodstream resulting in a clot forming
 - Another issue with PAD is critical limb ischemia, which is when you have an injury or infection to your legs or feet that doesn't heal, so it causes tissue death (gangrene). The only way to treat this once it has set in is to remove the affected area (amputation)

<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Prevention</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Leg pain when you are walking that feels like a muscle cramping (claudication)--it's triggered by increased activity and will go away after resting for a few minutes with the severity varying greatly -Numbness/weakness in legs -Coldness to lower leg/foot (especially one side more than the other) -Discoloration of legs -Shiny skin on legs -No/weak pulse in legs/feet -Hair loss on legs -Slow growth of hair on legs and toenails -Sores on feet/legs that don't heal 	<p><u>Goal:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Manage symptoms -Stop progression of atherosclerosis <p><u>Medication To:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lower cholesterol level -Reduce high blood pressure -Manage blood sugar (if needed) -Prevent blood clots -Treat claudication (cilostazol or pentoxifylline) <p><u>Severe Symptoms:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Angioplasty (involves inserting a tiny balloon into the narrowed artery, inflating it to widen the space and placing a small wire mesh coil, or stent, to keep it open) -Bypass surgery (using an artery or vein from elsewhere in your body and replacing the affected artery with it) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Don't smoke -Exercise regularly -Eat healthy, especially avoid foods that are high in saturated fat and salt -Maintain good control of blood sugar -Lower cholesterol levels -Avoid certain over-the-counter cold medications because they can constrict blood vessels making PAD symptoms worse <p>Take good care of your feet due to the reduced circulation/sensation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Wearing well-fitting shoes with thick, dry socks -Wash your feet daily, but be sure to dry them thoroughly and moisturize them accordingly (don't apply lotion between your toes as this can cause fungal infections) -Get infections treated promptly -Inspect your feet daily for any injuries -Be careful when trimming your toenails -Have any bunions, corns or calluses seen by a podiatrist (foot doctor)

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