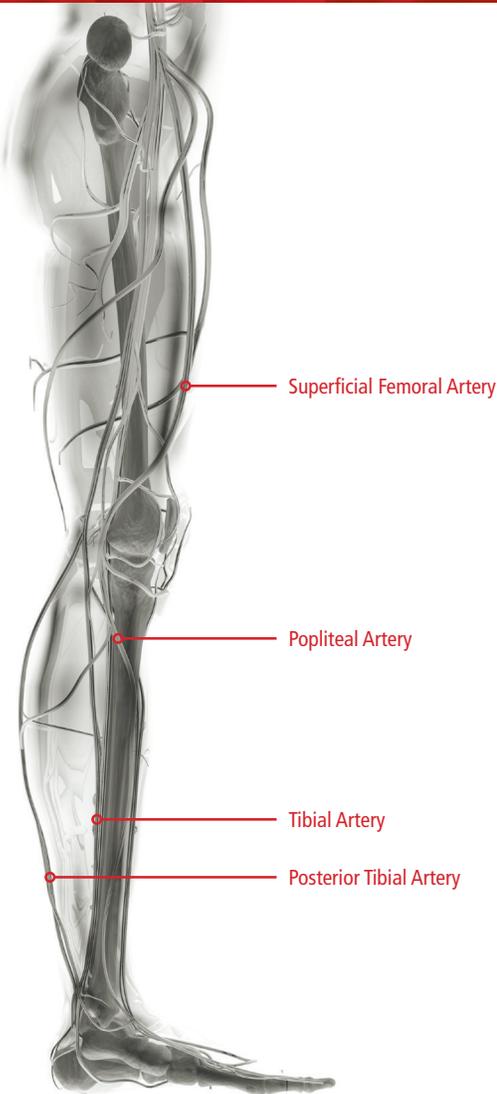


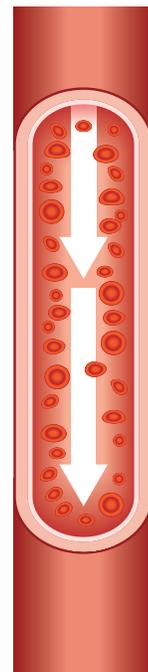


Get the facts on peripheral arterial disease (PAD).

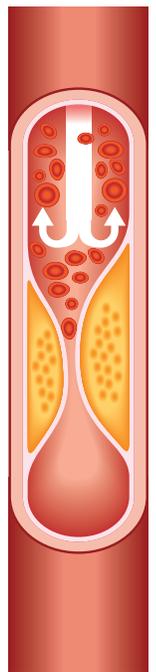
If you think it's *JUST* leg pain... think again.



Peripheral arterial disease (PAD) is a term used to classify all non-coronary arterial diseases. It is a buildup of plaque in the walls of arteries, which reduces or blocks the flow of blood to your limbs and other organs. PAD is most commonly seen in the legs.



Clear artery



Artery blocked by plaque

Two out of three Canadians are not aware of peripheral arterial disease, a common vascular disease that affects as many as 800,000 Canadians, 50% of which are asymptomatic.^{3, 6}

People with diabetes are two to four times more likely to have PAD.⁴



What are the risk factors?¹⁻⁵

Aging

The risk of PAD increases dramatically with age.

Smoking

Those who smoke or have a history of smoking have a greater risk of developing PAD.

Diabetes

One in three people over the age of 50 with diabetes is likely to have PAD.

High Cholesterol

Excess cholesterol and fat in your blood contribute to the formation of plaque in arteries, reducing or blocking blood flow to your heart, brain or limbs.

History of Vascular Disease, Heart Attack or Stroke

If you have heart disease, you have a one-in-three chance of also having PAD.

High Blood Pressure

Elevated blood pressure raises the risk of developing plaque in the arteries.

African or Hispanic Descent

Some minority groups are more than twice as likely to have PAD.

What are the symptoms?¹⁻⁵

Cramps in the leg muscles (buttocks, thigh or calf) that occur during activities like walking or climbing stairs.

Pain in the legs and/or feet while at rest or that disturbs sleep.

Sores or Wounds on toes, feet or legs that heal slowly, poorly or not at all.

Colour Changes in the skin of the feet, including paleness or blueness.

Lower Temperature in one leg compared with the other leg.

Poor Nail Growth and poor hair growth on toes and legs.

Don't delay sending your patients for a vascular assessment and consultation.
Delay in vascular assessment and improving perfusion can result in amputations.

References

1. National Heart Lung and Blood Institute Disease Index. Peripheral Arterial Disease. National Heart Lung and Blood Institute. <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/pad/>. Accessed on July 14, 2010.
2. American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, Alzheimer's Disease Education/Referral Center, American Diabetes Association, SAGE Group.
3. Norgren L, Hiatt WR, Dormandy JA, et al. Inter-society Consensus for the Management of Peripheral Arterial Disease (TASC II). *J Vasc Surg*. Jan 2007;45(1 Suppl S):S5A-S67A.
4. Bell D. Peripheral arterial disease overview: Here are some guidelines for prevention and treatment of this disease. *Pod Mgmt*. Apr/May 2009:210-220.
5. Hirsch AT, Haskal ZJ, Hertzler NR, et al. ACC/AHA 2005 Guidelines for the Management of Patients With Peripheral Arterial Disease (Lower Extremity, Renal, Mesenteric, and Abdominal Aortic): A Collaborative Report from the American Association for Vascular Surgery / Society for Vascular Surgery, Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions, Society for Vascular Medicine and Biology, Society of Interventional Radiology, and the ACC/AHA Task Force on Practice Guidelines. *J Am Coll Cardiol*. 2006;47:e1-e192.
6. Gaps in Public Knowledge of Peripheral Arterial Disease - The First Canadian P.A.D. Public Awareness Survey. <http://vascular-disease.org/files/pad-public-awareness-survey.pdf>

Additional resources

Heart and Stroke Foundation
<http://www.heartandstroke.com>

Canadian Diabetes Association
<http://guidelines.diabetes.ca>

Wounds Canada
www.woundscanada.ca

Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) <http://rnao.ca/>

Canadian Podiatric Medical Association (CPMA)
<http://www.podiatrycanada.org/>

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