

Frequently Asked Questions Vascular Disease and Screening

Q What is vascular disease and how serious is it?

A Most vascular disease is caused by atherosclerosis, a disease of the walls of the vessels, often called “hardening of the arteries.” This may cause plaque build-up to block the circulation, or weakening of the wall, which produces aneurysms that are prone to rupture. Vascular disease afflicts millions of Americans and is one of the most frequent causes of death and disability among older Americans.

Q What is the difference between heart disease and vascular disease?

A Coronary artery disease is the most common type of heart disease. It is caused by atherosclerosis, “hardening of the arteries” that is limited to the vessels supplying circulation to the heart muscle itself. Vascular disease outside the heart can affect the rest of the circulation to the body, including the blood supply to the arms, the legs, the brain, the kidneys, and the gut – even the fingers and toes may be affected.

Q What is vascular screening?

A Vascular screening provides early detection of the major vascular problems, such as peripheral arterial disease, which can cause serious circulation problems in the legs; abdominal aortic aneurysms, which can rupture and cause death; and carotid artery disease that causes strokes. The non-invasive tests used in screening safely and effectively detect these diseases and, if necessary, provide patients and their physicians with information to help them make decisions about the most appropriate treatment.



Your Vascular Health is a matter of life and limb

Q Who should consider undergoing the tests?

A Individuals who are over 55 years old, have smoked during their life, have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or who are diabetic should consider being screened. Those with heart disease or other cardiovascular problems, and anyone with a family history of aneurysms should also be tested.

Q Does early detection for vascular disease really help?

A Early detection of critical vascular problems can definitely prevent stroke and death. However, most people affected will be found to have mild to moderate problems, and in these cases, effective medical treatments are available to prevent the problem from getting worse. Like cancers whose outcome may be fatal when diagnosis is delayed, there is the possibility of limiting the progression of vascular diseases with early detection and proper medical treatment, and avoiding the necessity of surgery or angioplasty down the line.

Please call with any questions:

Frequently Asked Questions

Vascular Disease and Screening

Q What are the tests used in screening?

A The tests used in screening are a carotid duplex ultrasound scan, an aortic ultrasound scan, and a Doppler test for peripheral arterial disease. Participants also have their blood pressure recorded. All of these tests are simple, painless, risk-free examinations that take approximately less than 15 minutes to perform.

Q What is a carotid duplex scan?

A Ultrasound measurement of blood flow is performed in the carotid arteries in the neck to detect the presence of blockages in the circulation to the brain. The carotid scan can measure the severity of that blockage and help determine the risk of future stroke.

Q What is an aortic ultrasound scan?

A Ultrasound imaging is used to measure the diameter of the aorta (the main artery to the body) to detect an aneurysm. An aneurysm is an enlargement or ballooning of the aorta that may lead to fatal rupture of the vessel.

Q What is a Doppler test?

A The Doppler examination measures circulation to both legs to detect peripheral arterial disease (PAD). PAD can lead to serious problems like leg ulcers, gangrene, and amputation in the most serious cases. Even when PAD is mild, it identifies patients who have higher risks of heart attack and stroke, and who may therefore benefit from the medical treatment of these associated conditions.

Q Who conducts the tests?

A A multidisciplinary team of doctors, nurses, and technologists – specialists in vascular problems.



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Vascular surgeons are the only physicians treating vascular disease today who can perform all treatment options available, including medical management, minimally invasive endovascular angioplasty and stent procedures, and open carotid endarterectomy. Only when you see a vascular surgeon who offers all treatment modalities will you be assured of receiving the care that is most appropriate to your condition.

Please call with any questions:

For more information visit:

www.VascularWeb.org
or call 877-282-2010