

Peripheral Artery Disease

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Understanding Peripheral Artery Disease

Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD) is a chronic disease where plaque builds up and creates blockages in the arteries to the legs. This buildup typically happens gradually but left untreated, the blood flow in that artery can become limited or blocked all together.

By understanding PAD and working closely with your healthcare team, you can take steps to manage the condition and improve your quality of life. Your healthcare team will work with you to determine the best treatment plan based on your specific symptoms.

Signs and Symptoms of PAD

If you have PAD, you might experience:

- Claudication: pain while walking that lessens when you stop walking
- Rest pain: throbbing pain in the feet even when feet are elevated or while resting
- Sores or ulcers: slowly healing or non-healing wound on the legs and/or feet

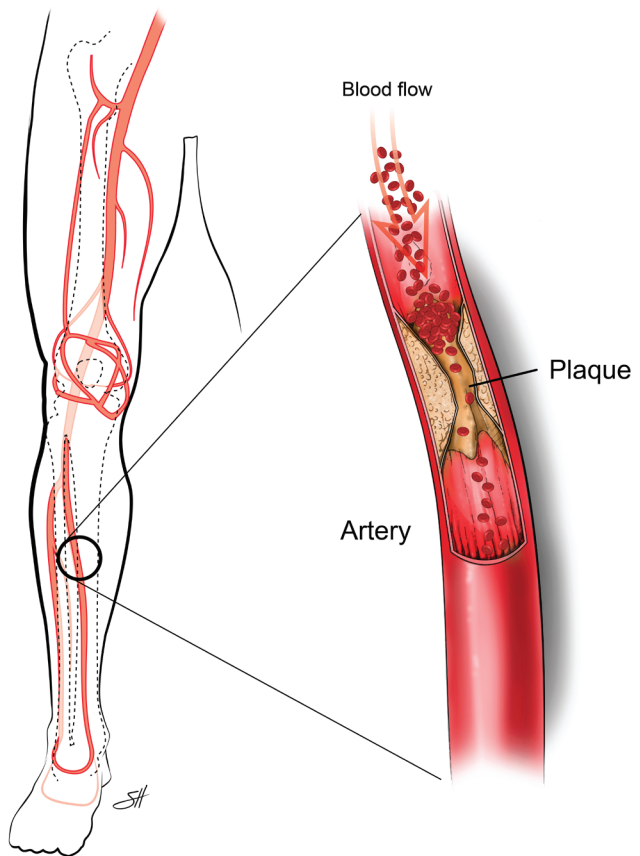
Risk Factors

- Diabetes
- Smoking
- Obesity
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol

Non-Surgical Treatment Options

Improving risk factors can help manage PAD:

- Quit smoking
- Increase daily physical activity
- Work with your primary care doctor to achieve control of your diabetes, high blood pressure or high cholesterol
- Medications to help prevent plaque buildup:
 - Cilostazol or Pletal
 - Clopidogrel or Plavix
 - Aspirin
- Statin Therapy (cholesterol medication)



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Surgical Treatment

While many cases of PAD can be managed with lifestyle changes and medications, surgery may be considered in certain situations:

- **Lifestyle limiting claudication:** Your symptoms have progressed to constant pain or difficulty walking, preventing you from performing normal daily activities.
- **Non-healing Wounds:** There are sores or ulcers on the legs and/or feet, which are not healing with appropriate wound care.

Surgical Treatment Options

- **Arterial Bypass:** The surgeon creates a detour around the blocked artery to improve blood flow.
- **Angioplasty and/or Stenting:** This involves opening the narrowed artery using a balloon and/or placing a stent (small mesh tube) to keep the artery open.
- **Endarterectomy:** Surgical removal of the plaque buildup from the artery walls.

If you notice signs or symptoms of PAD, consult your healthcare provider promptly to discuss treatment options.

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