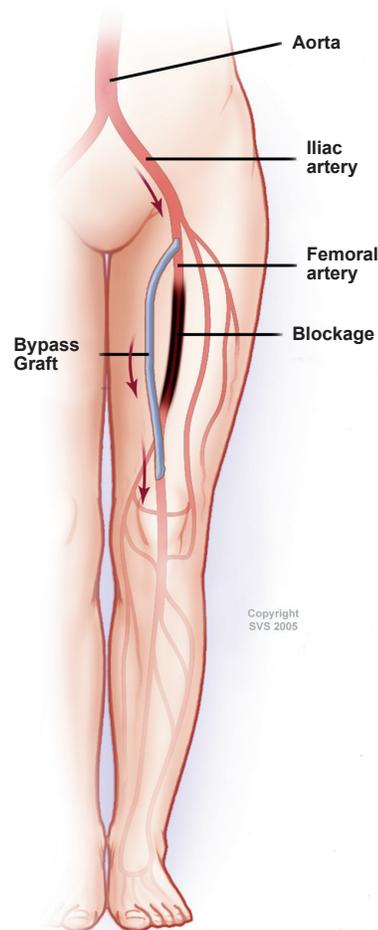


Peripheral Arterial Disease

What is peripheral arterial disease?

Your arteries deliver oxygen-rich blood from your heart to other parts of your body. Your peripheral arteries carry blood away from the heart to your arms and legs. The peripheral arteries in your legs are extensions of the largest artery in your body, the aorta. The aorta travels down through your abdominal region and branches off into the iliac arteries of each leg. The iliac arteries further divide into smaller arteries and deliver blood down your legs to your toes.

Healthy peripheral arteries are smooth and unobstructed, allowing blood to flow freely to the legs and provide oxygen, glucose, and other nutrients that your legs need. Typically with age, the peripheral arteries build up plaque, a sticky substance made up mostly of fat and cholesterol. Plaque narrows the passageway within the arteries and causes them to become stiff. Peripheral arterial disease results when the peripheral arteries become too narrow or obstructed and limit the blood flow to the legs. If left untreated, peripheral arterial disease can cause pain or aching in the legs, difficulty with walking, resting pain in the foot at night in bed, non-healing sores or infections in the toes or feet, and can lead to limb loss in its most severe form. In addition, it can be associated with other serious arterial conditions leading to heart attacks and stroke.



Causes and risk factors

- Age
- Gender—males are more prone to the condition than females
- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Diabetes
- Smoking
- High cholesterol
- Obesity
- Lack of exercise
- Family history of vascular problems

Vascular surgeons are the only physicians treating vascular disease today who can provide all the treatment options available.

Society for Vascular Surgery® members are the leaders in vascular health who provide the most comprehensive diagnosis and treatment.

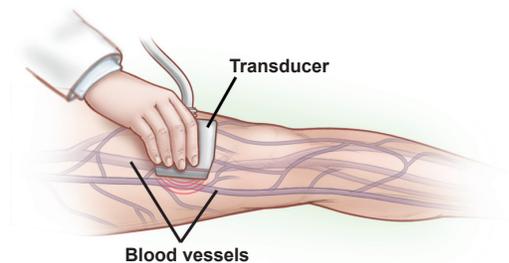
For more information visit VascularWeb.org

Symptoms

There may be no symptoms in the early stages of peripheral arterial disease. Developing symptoms may include discomfort or pain in your legs when walking but no pain when you rest.

Diagnosis

The diagnosis of peripheral arterial disease can be established, and its severity confirmed, by a simple, noninvasive Doppler examination.



If you experience symptoms of peripheral arterial disease in your legs, see a vascular surgeon. They are the only physicians treating peripheral vascular disease today who can perform all the treatment options available, including medical management, minimally invasive endovascular angioplasty and stent procedures, and open bypass surgery. 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.

Treatment

Depending on the severity of your condition, treatment options may include lifestyle changes, medications, minimally invasive angioplasty/stenting, or open bypass surgery.



For more information visit VascularWeb.org