




Peripheral artery disease (PAD) referral pathways

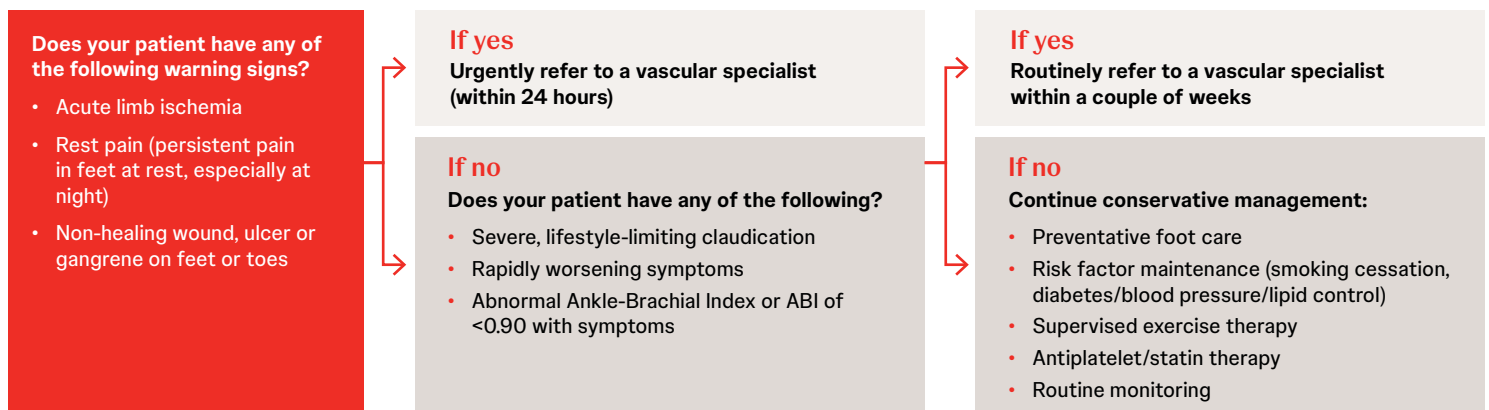
Early signs of peripheral artery disease (PAD) can be “silent” and easy to attribute to another condition.¹ An estimated 50 percent of patients undergoing below-the-knee leg amputation have never had a vascular evaluation, often due to factors such as delays in diagnosis, lack of patient and physician awareness of PAD symptoms and referral breakdowns.^{2,3}

Clear criteria for referring patients to a vascular specialist efficiently and with confidence is listed below. Referring effectively gives your patients a better chance at earlier treatment and avoiding preventable amputation.

Quick referral guide⁴⁻⁶

 Patient presentation	 Refer to	 Referral urgency
Mild, stable claudication with no warning signs	Vascular specialist or PAD clinic with exercise program	Routine
Severe, lifestyle-limiting claudication (failed consistent therapy)	Vascular surgeon, PAD clinic or interventional cardiologist/radiologist	Routine (within weeks)
Non-healing foot wound, ulcer or gangrene	Vascular surgeon <i>and</i> wound care specialist or podiatrist	Urgent (within days)
Diabetic foot with suspected neuroischemia	Multidisciplinary limb salvage team (if available) or vascular surgeon <i>and</i> podiatrist	Immediate (same day)
Symptoms of chronic limb-threatening ischemia	Multidisciplinary limb salvage team (if available) or vascular surgeon	Immediate (same day)
Symptoms of acute limb ischemia	Multidisciplinary limb salvage team (if available) or vascular surgeon (on-call/emergency)	Immediate (same day)

Referral pathways⁴⁻⁶



References:

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3. Murray-Ramcharan M, Rodriguez R, Khan S, et al. The role of noninvasive vascular assessment prior to lower extremity amputation. *Vascular*. 2025.doi:10.1177/17085381251339934 4. Gerhard-Herman MD, et al. 2016 AHA/ACC guideline on the management of patients with lower extremity peripheral artery disease. *Circulation*. 2017;135(12):e686-e725 5. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Peripheral arterial disease: diagnosis and management (NG147). NICE Guideline. 2020. 6. Conte MS, et al. Global vascular guidelines on the management of chronic limb-threatening ischemia. *J Vasc Surg*. 2019;69(6S):3S-125S

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