

Save Legs.  
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# Understanding peripheral artery disease (PAD)

This is a simple beginner's guide to help you understand what PAD is and why recognizing the signs and symptoms early matters.



## What is PAD?

PAD is a common cardiovascular disease that occurs when plaque builds up in the arteries that carry blood to the legs and feet. This reduces blood flow and can lead to symptoms like leg and foot pain, numbness, non-healing wounds and in serious cases, limb loss.<sup>1,2</sup>

## By the numbers

~12M Americans over the age of 40 are affected by PAD<sup>3</sup>

~49% of primary care physicians recognized their patients' PAD diagnosis during the first line screening<sup>4</sup>

To help you assess if you are at higher risk for PAD, review the [risk assessment form](#).

## Why early detection matters

- **PAD symptoms can be silent**, making it easy to ignore or mistake it for other conditions like nerve pain or arthritis<sup>1,2</sup>
- Spotting PAD early may give you and your healthcare team more options to manage it, **reduce complications and reduce the risk of serious outcomes like amputation**<sup>1,5</sup>
- If left undiagnosed and untreated, **PAD may progress to a severe form called chronic limb-threatening ischemia (CLTI)**, impacting nearly two million patients in the U.S.<sup>2</sup>

## What's next?



If you think that you are experiencing any PAD symptoms or are at a higher risk, it's time to talk to your doctor. To help guide your discussion with your doctor, bring the [conversation guide](#) to make the most of your appointment.



One of the most common screening methods for PAD is called an Ankle-Brachial Index (ABI) test. It is a simple, non-invasive test that measures how well your blood flows to your legs and feet.<sup>1,5</sup>



Based on your results, your doctor may recommend lifestyle changes (like supervised exercise or dietary changes), medications or even procedures to help restore blood flow.<sup>1,2</sup>

## Know the signs. Act early. Save your legs.

### References:

1. Gerhard-Herman MD, et al. *Circulation*. 2017;135(12):e726–e779 2. Criqui MH, et al. *Circ Res*. 2021;128(12):1904-1917 3. Gornik HL, Hess CN, Secemsky EA, et al. 2024 ACC/AHA/AACVPR/APMA/ABC/SCAI/SVM/SVN/SVS/SIR/VESSE guideline for the management of lower extremity peripheral artery disease: a report of the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Joint Committee on Clinical Practice Guidelines. *Circulation*. 2024;149(24):e1313–e1410 4. Hirsch AT, Criqui MH, Treat-Jacobson D, et al. Peripheral arterial disease detection, awareness, and treatment in primary care. *JAMA*. 2001;286(11):1317-1324. doi:10.1001/jama.286.11.1317 5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Peripheral arterial disease. Accessed July 23, 2025. cdc.gov

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