Screening for Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD)

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En Español (Spanish Version)

Because peripheral artery disease (PAD) caused by atherosclerosis is a progressive condition, screening is directed at detecting the causative diseases:

- Smoking
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Blood fat disorders (such as high cholesterol)
- Obesity

Your annual health check-up is designed to detect the earliest signs of these major diseases.

Screening Tests

- Visual inspection — Your doctor should look carefully at the skin of all of your limbs during regular check-ups. Changes in skin texture and/or color, the presence of ulcerations, or nonhealing wounds may indicate PAD.
- Pulses — Your doctor can listen and feel for pulses in your feet and groins. Bruits (abnormal sounds in the arteries heard with a stethoscope) and weak pulses are signs of possible PAD.
- Ankle-brachial index (ABI) — To determine the ABI, your doctor takes pressures in both arms and ankles using a blood pressure cuff and a simple device to detect blood flow called a Doppler. The blood pressure readings are then used to calculate your ABI. A value less than or equal to 0.9 signals PAD.
- Blood pressure — Your doctor should check your blood pressure at every visit. Blood pressure that is lower in one limb than in the others may indicate PAD in the vessels serving that limb.
- Urine and blood sugar — These routine tests can identify diabetes, a major risk for vascular disease.
- Blood fats — A lipid panel measures total cholesterol, both good (HDL) and bad (LDL) cholesterol, and triglycerides. Abnormal blood fats are a risk factor for PAD. Proper treatment of blood fat disorders (hyperlipidemias) can reduce the incidence of atherosclerotic disease.

REFERENCES:


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