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Arterial Disease Treatment Journey

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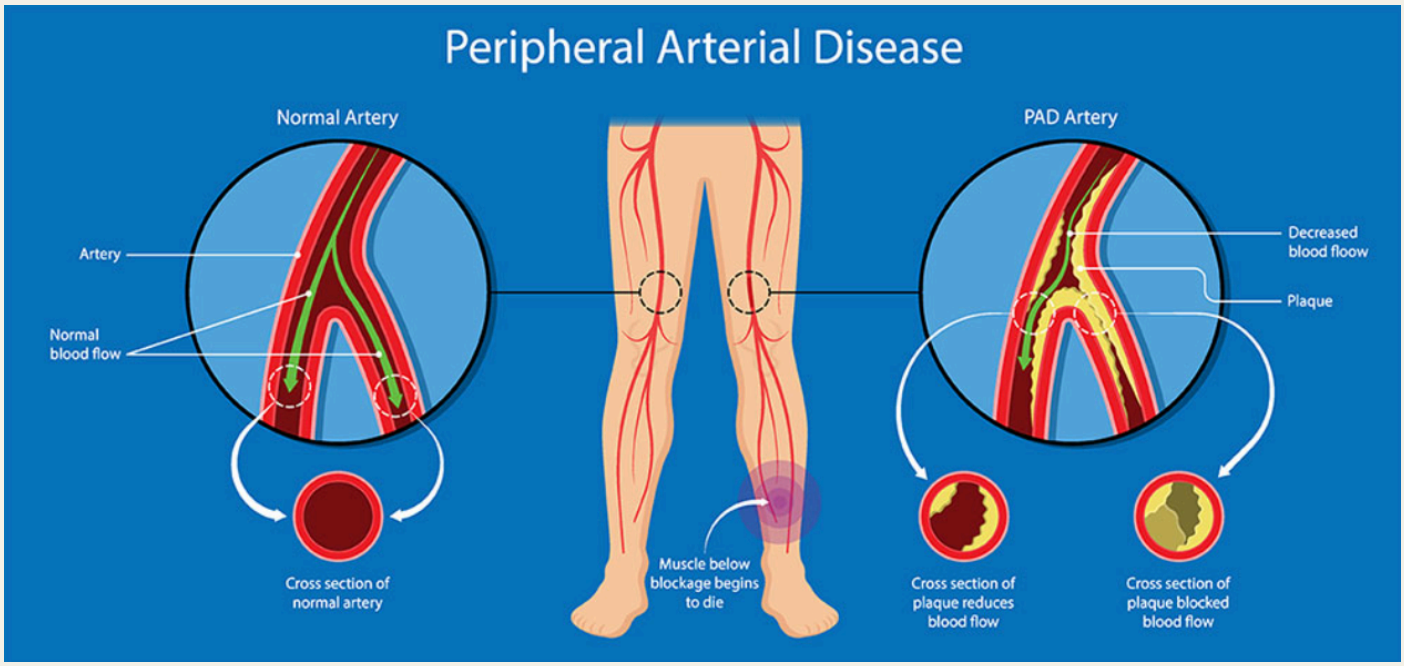
Understanding Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD)



What is PAD?
Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD) occurs when blood vessels in your legs and feet become narrowed or blocked by plaque buildup. This limits blood flow, causing pain, cramping, or other symptoms.

Common Symptoms of PAD:

- Pain or cramping in your legs when walking or exercising ("claudication").
- Numbness or weakness in your legs.
- Slow-healing wounds on your feet or legs.
- Coldness in one leg compared to the other.
- Discolored or shiny skin on your legs.

Your PAD Treatment Journey

Step 1: First Appointment & Ultrasound
Your journey begins with an arterial ultrasound to check blood flow in your legs. Based on your symptoms, your doctor will classify your condition:

- Severe Symptoms (Rutherford 4+): Difficulty walking 100 feet without pain.
- Mild to Moderate Symptoms (Rutherford 1-3): Can walk 100 feet without pain.

Step 2: Care Plan for Severe Symptoms
If your symptoms are severe, your treatment may include:

- Pelvic and Lower Extremity Angiogram: A procedure to evaluate and treat blockages.
- Follow-Up in 1-2 Weeks: Repeat ultrasound and, if needed, a carotid ultrasound.

If Improvement is Significant:

- Regular follow-ups:
  - 3 months: ABI (Ankle-Brachial Index) testing.
  - 6 months: Arterial ultrasound.
  - Annual: Carotid or abdominal ultrasounds.

If No Improvement:

- Additional angiograms or interventions to address blockages.
- If no further procedures are possible, a Peripheral Nerve Stimulator may help manage pain.

Step 3: Care Plan for Mild to Moderate Symptoms
For less severe symptoms, your doctor may start with:

- Exercise Therapy: Walking or leg exercises to improve circulation.
- Medications: To reduce plaque, improve blood flow, and relieve symptoms.

3-Month Follow-Up:

- If symptoms improve, continue regular follow-ups as above.
- If no improvement, an angiogram may be needed to identify and treat blockages.

If Symptoms Persist:

- Additional angiograms or follow-up interventions may be required.
- If no further treatments are an option, a Peripheral Nerve Stimulator may help with pain relief.

PAD Treatment Options

1. Angiogram with Laser Atherectomy:

- Angiogram: Identifies blockages using a catheter and dye.
- Laser Atherectomy: Removes plaque using a laser to restore blood flow.
- Recovery: Depending on your condition, recovery time ranges from 20 minutes to 3 hours.

2. Medications:

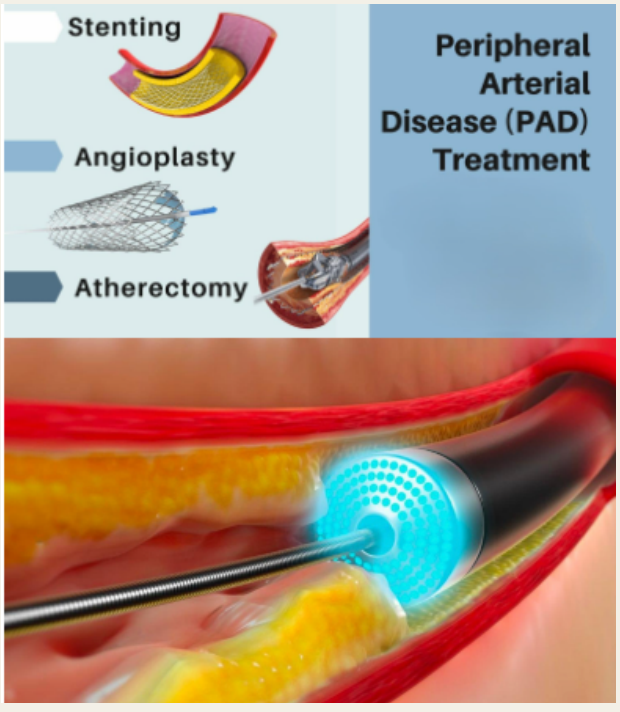
- Blood thinners: Prevent clots.
- Statins: Lower cholesterol and plaque buildup.
- Blood flow meds (e.g., cilostazol): Improve walking and reduce pain.
- Control meds for blood pressure or diabetes: Manage conditions that worsen PAD.

3. Exercise Therapy:

A structured program to improve circulation and walking ability over time.

What You Can Do

- Quit Smoking: The most important step to slow PAD progression.
- Eat Heart-Healthy Foods: Focus on low-fat, low-salt options.
- Take Medications as Directed: Consistency matters.
- Stay Active: Regular exercise supports better blood flow and reduces symptoms.



Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD): FAQs

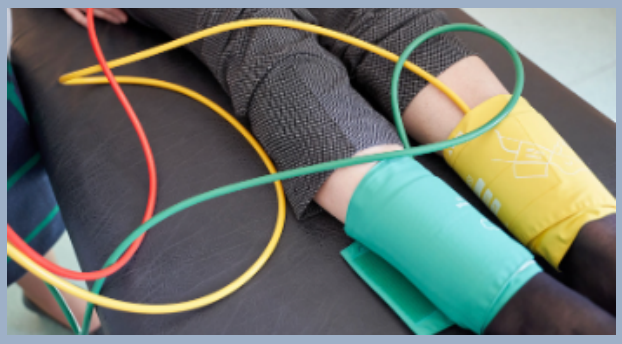
What happens at my first appointment?
You'll get an arterial ultrasound to check blood flow and find any blockages.

Your doctor will classify your symptoms using the Rutherford system:

- Rutherford 1-3: Mild to moderate symptoms (you can walk 100 feet without pain).
- Rutherford 4 or higher: Severe symptoms (you can't walk 100 feet without pain).

How long do diagnostic tests take?

- Arterial Ultrasound: 30-60 minutes.
- Carotid Ultrasound: 30 minutes.
- ABI Testing: 15-30 minutes.
- Your total office visit should be about an hour or less.



Will the treatments hurt?

- Angiograms are minimally invasive and typically not painful.
- Numbing agents and moderate sedation help keep you comfortable during the procedure.

How long does the procedure take?

- Angiogram: 1-2 hours, depending on complexity.
- Peripheral Nerve Stimulator Placement: 1-2 hours.

What are the possible side effects?

- Common: Mild bruising, swelling, or slight pain at the procedure site.
- Rare: Bleeding, infection, blood clots, or nerve irritation.

What happens if I don't treat PAD?
Untreated PAD can lead to:

- Worse symptoms like pain and limited mobility.
- Serious complications, including ulcers, gangrene, or amputation.
- Increased risk of heart attack or stroke.

When can I return to normal activities?

- After an angiogram: Light activities in 1-2 days; avoid heavy lifting and strenuous activity for 7 days.
- After nerve stimulator placement: Normal activities in 1-2 weeks.

How will I know if the procedure is working?

- Positive signs: Less pain, better mobility, and improved blood flow.
- Negative signs: Persistent pain, swelling, or no improvement in symptoms.

Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD): FAQs

What steps come after my results?

- Mild/Moderate Symptoms:
  - Start with exercise therapy and medications.
  - Follow up in 3 months to check progress.
  - If no improvement, move to a pelvic and lower extremity angiogram to address blockages.
- Severe Symptoms:
  - Begin with a pelvic and lower extremity angiogram right away.
  - Follow up in 1-2 weeks with an arterial ultrasound (and possibly a carotid ultrasound).

How should I prepare for a procedure like an angiogram?

- Fasting: Don't eat or drink anything for 8 hours before the procedure.
- Share medical info: Let your doctor know about your medications and allergies.
- Plan for transportation: You'll need someone to drive you home.
- Our pre-op nurse will call with detailed instructions beforehand.

How soon will I see results?

- Mild/Moderate Symptoms:
  - Improvement from exercise therapy or medications may take a few weeks to 3 months.
- Severe Symptoms:
  - Some relief may happen immediately after an angiogram, but full recovery can take a few weeks.

How many follow-ups will I need?

- First follow-up: 1-2 weeks after procedures.
- Ongoing monitoring:
  - 3 months: ABI testing.
  - 6 months: Arterial ultrasound.
  - Annually: Carotid or abdominal ultrasounds.

What happens at follow-up visits?

- Your doctor will:
  - Check if your symptoms have improved.
  - Perform follow-up ultrasounds to monitor blood flow.
  - Recommend further treatments if needed.

Understanding Pain and Sedation During Your Procedure

Everyone experiences pain and sedation differently, and your comfort level during the procedure can depend on several factors, including your body's response to anesthesia. For example, individuals who regularly consume alcohol or those living with chronic pain may require adjustments to achieve the right level of sedation.

Our goal is to ensure you are as comfortable as possible while keeping your safety our top priority. While we aim to provide effective pain relief, it's important to recognize that over-sedation carries certain risks, which our medical team carefully monitors and manages.

Lasting Results

PAD Symptoms Improvement
It's understandable to feel frustrated if your symptoms haven't resolved as quickly as you'd hoped. However, improving symptoms and restoring blood flow in PAD is a process that takes time and consistency. Here's why:

- Healing Takes Time: Medications, exercise therapy, and procedures like angiograms work to improve circulation, but your body needs time to adjust and repair.
- Severity Matters: Severe PAD may require multiple treatments or follow-ups to fully address blockages and improve blood flow.
- Lifestyle Changes Are Key: Quitting smoking, staying active, and following your care plan are critical to long-term progress.

What You Should Expect:
- Mild to Moderate Symptoms: Improvements may take weeks to months, depending on how consistently you follow your plan.
- Severe Symptoms: Relief may be noticeable after an angiogram, but full recovery can take weeks, with regular follow-ups needed to ensure progress.

Remember: PAD is a long-term condition. Staying consistent with your treatment plan and follow-ups is the best way to ensure your symptoms improve and complications are prevented. Progress might be slow, but every step is moving you toward better health.