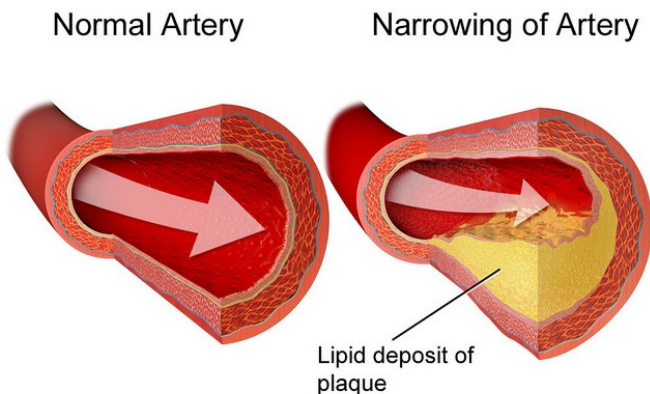
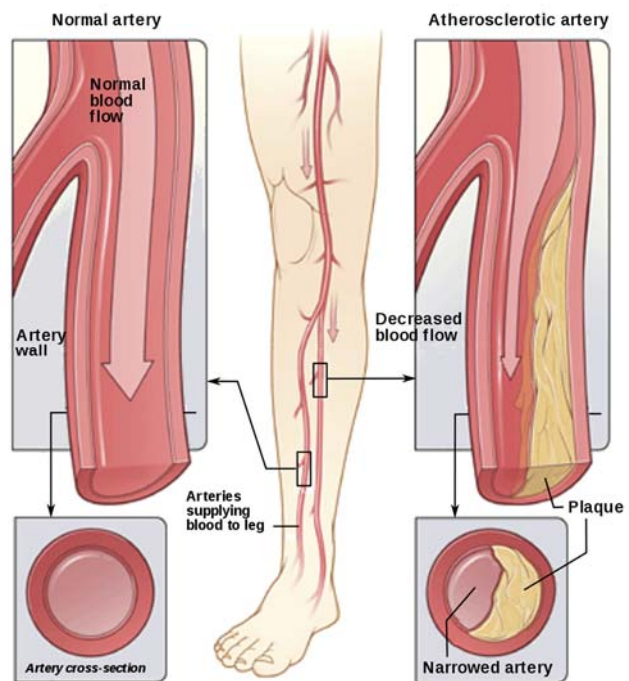


Peripheral Arterial Disease

Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD) is caused by hardening of the blood vessels that deliver blood to the legs causing them to become narrowed. This is very similar to heart disease, in which the blood vessels that provide blood flow to the heart also become narrow. The result is decreased blood flow to the areas that are fed by the narrowed vessels. PAD is very common. About 3 million people per year will be diagnosed with PAD. Smoking, diabetes, high cholesterol, and genetics are some of the most common risk factors for this illness.

Fortunately, most people can be treated for PAD without surgery or procedures if the disease is caught early on. Some patients with PAD may not very many symptoms at all, although many will develop pain when walking, known as intermittent claudication. This is a type of burning pain or cramping that develops when someone walks and there's not enough blood flow going to the muscles in the leg. The pain stops when the walking stops, but will come back once walking resumes.

A small number of patients with PAD will develop a constant pain which may also be seen with a sore in the leg or foot that will not heal. This is because there is not enough blood flow to the area that needs to heal, and the wound will remain open or get worse. In its most serious form, PAD can cause amputations to be required as the lack of blood flow may be so severe that the tissue is lost forever, a condition called gangrene.



If you have PAD, it's extremely important that you stop smoking, as smoking will cause this disease to get worse, potentially even progressing to gangrene. Your doctor will discuss with you the options for treatment of PAD. Diagnosing this condition usually requires some specialized tests, such as blood pressure test called an "ABI" which is short for ankle-brachial index. This test is done in quickly, and involves placement of blood pressure cuff in the arms and legs. Your doctor will then interpret the results of the test and discuss these with you.

PAD patients also commonly undergo CT scans called CTA, which are CT Angiograms. This test involves placement of an IV through which x-ray dye is given into the veins. This allows your doctor to see the condition of your blood vessels and allows for a detailed treatment plan.

If you have leg pain when you walk, or a sore in your foot that will not heal, call today for an evaluation by our Vascular Interventional Radiologists.



Gangrene of the toes due to PAD

