



What Is Peripheral Artery Disease?

Peripheral artery disease (PAD) is a condition that affects millions of people. PAD occurs when there is a buildup of **plaque**, or fatty deposits, inside your arteries that carry blood to your legs and feet. Many people have not heard of this condition. PAD often goes unnoticed because people assume their leg pain is due to soreness or arthritis. However, if your legs are healthy, you shouldn't have chronic leg pain.

Here are some factors that increase your risk for PAD:

- Increasing age
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Smoking
- High blood cholesterol

What Are the Symptoms of PAD?

The most common symptom is cramping in your leg muscles while you're walking. Pain that goes away when you stop and rest is called **intermittent claudication**. This is

caused by poor blood flow to muscles due to blocked arteries.

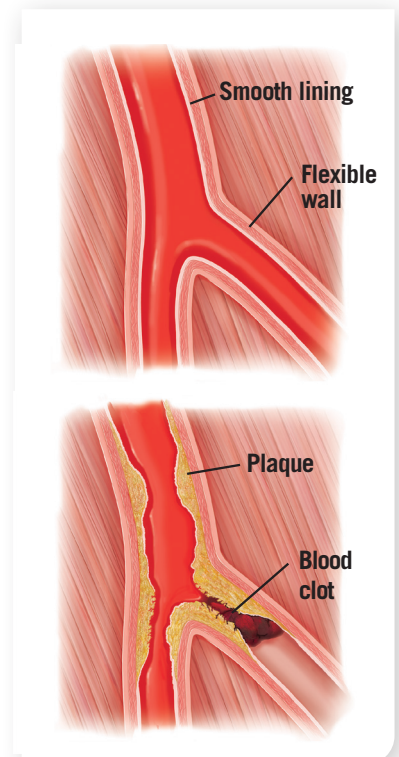
Other symptoms of PAD include:

- Burning or aching pain in your feet and toes while resting or sleeping
- Skin sores and wounds that won't heal
- Nails that don't grow
- Hair loss on legs
- Pale or discolored leg or foot
- Changing skin color on your legs

Both legs often have symptoms, although one leg may be worse.

The symptoms of PAD usually develop slowly over time. *If your symptoms develop quickly, or pain significantly increases over a short period of time, get help right away.* If you delay treatment, PAD can lead to serious health problems.

If you have a medical condition such as diabetes or high blood pressure and have symptoms of PAD, talk with your health care provider right away.



For more information, review these related flyers:

- Focus on the Ankle-Brachial Index
- Focus on Walking
- Lifesaving Tips About ... Foot Care and PAD; High Blood Pressure and PAD; Managing Diabetes and PAD; Smoking and Pad

