

Facts about Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm and Screening



Your Vascular Health is a matter of life and limb

Please call with any questions:

Why should I be screened?

Abdominal aortic aneurysms (AAA) are very serious medical conditions that result when the wall of your aorta, the largest artery in the body, progressively weakens and begins to bulge. AAAs can be permanently cured when diagnosed early. However, if undetected, aortic aneurysms can progressively enlarge, silently, without symptoms, and eventually can rupture, which represents a major risk to life.

- Two-thirds of patients who suffer rupture of an AAA didn't know they had the aneurysm until it ruptured, emphasizing how important it is for patients at risk to be screened for this very serious vascular condition.
- Nearly 200,000 people in the United States are diagnosed with a AAA annually.
- Approximately 15,000 of those cases may be severe enough to cause death if not treated.
- It is estimated that more than one million people are living with undiagnosed AAA, and at least 95 percent of these can be successfully treated if detected prior to rupture.
- Medicare offers a one-time, free screening for AAA to qualified seniors as part of its Welcome to Medicare physical. This physical must be conducted within the first six months of enrollment in Medicare. Men who have smoked at least 100 cigarettes during their life, and men and women with a family history of AAA qualify for the Medicare screening.

What is AAA?

The aorta is the body's largest artery and carries oxygen-rich blood from the heart to all your vital organs and to your legs and feet. AAA occurs when the wall of your aorta progressively weakens and begins to bulge. An AAA may continue to enlarge and eventually rupture if it is left untreated, causing severe internal bleeding and possibly death. The risk of rupture is directly related to the size (diameter) of the AAA.

Other concerns are clots or debris that may develop within an AAA. These substances can be carried to other areas in your body and block circulation, causing severe pain or possibly limb loss if blood flow is cut off for too long.

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How do you screen for AAA?

A painless, quick, risk-free ultrasound scan can diagnose an AAA and accurately measure its size (diameter) to determine the need for treatment.

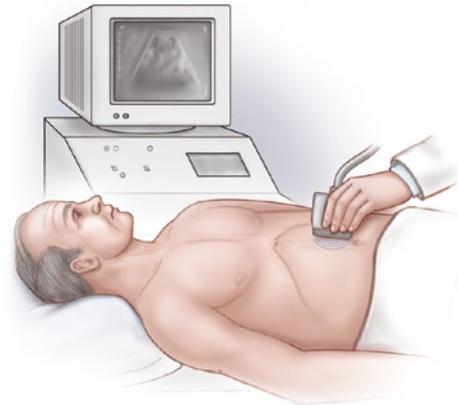
Risk Factors

- Individuals over 60 years are most likely to develop AAA
- Males are more prone to AAA than females
- History of atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries)
- Family history of AAA
- Smoking
- High blood pressure
- Chronic lung disease

Symptoms of AAA

Although AAA has few symptoms some patients report

- A pulsing feeling in their abdomen
- Unexplained, severe pain in their abdomen or lower back
- Pain, discoloration, or sores on their feet (this is a rare symptom)



Vascular surgeons are the only physicians treating vascular disease today who can perform all treatment options available, including medical management, minimally invasive endovascular stent graft procedures, and open aneurysm repair. The safest and most appropriate treatment for your AAA will depend on its size, location, and other anatomic factors. Vascular surgeons have been treating AAAs for decades and have pioneered the development of new less invasive approaches such as stent graft repair. Only when you see a vascular surgeon who performs all possible treatment options will you be assured of receiving the care that is most appropriate to your specific condition.

Please call with any questions:

For more information visit:

www.VascularWeb.org
or call 877-282-2010