



Life Saving Tips About... Managing Diabetes and P.A.D.

What is the link between diabetes and P.A.D.?

Peripheral arterial disease (P.A.D.) is a common disease that occurs when the arteries in the legs become narrowed or clogged with fatty deposits, or plaque. When leg arteries are clogged, blood flow to the legs and feet is reduced. People with diabetes are at higher risk for having P.A.D. Some studies have found that one out of three people with diabetes over age 50 has P.A.D., and P.A.D. is even more common in African Americans and Hispanics who have diabetes.

Having P.A.D. and diabetes can be a very serious problem. People who have both diseases are much more likely to have a heart attack or stroke than those who just have P.A.D., and they are more likely to die at a younger age.

Because many people with diabetes do not have feeling in their feet or legs due to nerve disease, they may have P.A.D. but cannot feel any symptoms. As a result, they do not know they have P.A.D., or they may have it for a long time before it is diagnosed. Further, when blood flow to your feet and legs is narrowed or blocked due to P.A.D., it takes longer for cuts or wounds to heal, which may increase the risk for amputation (or losing a foot or leg).

How do I know if I have P.A.D.?

Talk with your health care provider right away if you have any of these **warning signs of P.A.D.:**

- Fatigue, tiredness or pain in your legs, thighs or buttocks that always happens when you walk but that goes away when you rest.
- Foot or toe pain at rest that often disturbs your sleep.
- Skin sores or wounds on your feet or toes that are slow to heal.

Most people with P.A.D. do not have any symptoms. Guidelines released by leading vascular organizations recommend that people with diabetes over the age of 50 be tested for

P.A.D. Testing is also recommended for people with diabetes under the age of 50 with other risk factors, such as smoking, high blood pressure or cholesterol problems.

To test for P.A.D., your health provider will examine the pulses in your feet and legs and may order a test called the ankle-brachial index, or ABI. **The ABI is the best test for finding out if you have P.A.D.** It uses sound waves to find out if there is reduced blood flow in the arteries. It also compares the blood pressure in your ankles with the blood pressure in your arms. P.A.D. also can be diagnosed by other tests that measure blood pressures in the leg (segmental pressure), toe pressures (toe-brachial index or TBI) or artery blood flow (with ultrasound).

What steps can I take to control my diabetes and P.A.D.?

The good news is you can take steps to prevent damage to your blood vessels and cut your chances of having a heart attack, stroke or losing a leg by taking care of your blood glucose (sugar) and your other heart disease risk factors. We call these the **ABCs of Diabetes.**

A is for the A1C test that measures your average blood glucose over the past 2 to 3 months.

B is for your blood pressure.

C is for your cholesterol.

Ask your health care team what your ABC numbers are and work together to develop a plan to reach your target goals. At every visit, ask what your numbers are and keep track of them. If you are not reaching your goals, work with your health care team to change your plan.

In most cases, **these steps can help you manage the ABCs of diabetes** and help lower your chances of having a heart attack, stroke or amputation:

- Follow a meal plan to make wise food choices.

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P.A.D.
Peripheral Arterial Disease
COALITION

**Saving Limbs
and Lives**

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about P.A.D., call
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