



HEALTH AWARENESS

P.A.D. And Diabetes: What You Need To Know

(NAPSA)—The increase in the number of people in the U.S. with diabetes is also raising concern about a condition that is linked to diabetes but often goes undetected.

The condition is peripheral arterial disease, or P.A.D. It occurs when blood vessels in the legs are narrowed or blocked by fatty deposits, decreasing blood flow to legs and feet.

Experts say people with P.A.D. are at increased risk for heart attack and stroke, and people with diabetes are at increased risk for P.A.D.

According to one study, it's estimated that 30 percent of people with diabetes will develop P.A.D. Unfortunately, P.A.D. is often not diagnosed in a timely fashion. One reason is that the symptoms—such as fatigue and heaviness of the legs when walking—are often falsely attributed to aging. Left untreated, P.A.D. can lead to a greater risk of amputation, stroke or heart attack.

The Vascular Disease Foundation (VDF) is the only nonprofit organization focused on vascular diseases with the sole purpose of providing public education and improving awareness about vascular diseases. It recommends that all persons with diabetes over the age of 50 get screened for P.A.D. using a test known as the Ankle Brachial Index, or ABI.

The test compares the blood pressure in a person's ankle to the blood pressure reading taken from the person's arm. If the reading from your leg is lower than the one taken from your arm, it may be a sign that you have P.A.D.

Fortunately, there are steps physicians and patients can take to manage P.A.D. According to VDF's president, Alain T. Drooz, M.D.,



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those with diabetes who suspect they may have P.A.D. should do the following:

- Keep their blood sugar level in an acceptable range.
- If they smoke, they should stop. If they can't stop on their own, they should ask their health care provider for assistance.
- Work to get their blood pressure below 130/80.
- Get their LDL (bad) cholesterol below 100 mg/dL.
- Talk to their health care provider about taking aspirin or other anti-platelet medicines.
- Studies have also shown that exercise, such as walking, can be used to treat P.A.D. and, in some cases, prevent it.

VDF supports the P.A.D. Coalition and the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute's national campaign "Stay in Circulation: Take Steps to Learn About P.A.D." To learn more, call 1-866-PAD-INFO or visit www.vdf.org.