

How To Tell If You're At Risk For P.A.D.

(NAPSM)—Learning more about the risk factors for peripheral arterial disease (P.A.D.) can help you recognize the condition and get treatment if you need it—and that's especially important for African Americans. P.A.D. is more common among African Americans than among any other racial or ethnic group.

One reason may be that the conditions that raise the risk for P.A.D.—diabetes and high blood pressure—are more common among African Americans.

Between 8 and 12 million Americans over the age of 50 (or one in 20 adults) have P.A.D., according to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)—part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The disease occurs when arteries—particularly in the lower legs—become clogged with fatty deposits that limit blood flow.

P.A.D. increases the risk of heart attack and stroke and affects mobility, but timely detection and treatment can reduce these risks and improve your quality of life.

Your risk for P.A.D. is increased not only if you are African American but also if you smoke or used to smoke; have diabetes, high blood pressure or high blood cholesterol; or have a history of vascular disease, heart attack or stroke.

In an effort to raise awareness about P.A.D., NHLBI and the P.A.D. Coalition launched the Stay in Circulation: Take Steps to Learn About P.A.D. campaign as a way for people to learn more about the risk factors, symptoms and treatment options for P.A.D.

“P.A.D. is not an inevitable consequence of aging,” says Elizabeth G. Nabel, M.D., NHLBI director. “Early detection and treatment of P.A.D. are important for staying



African-Americans are twice as likely to develop peripheral arterial disease (P.A.D) as any other racial or ethnic group.

in circulation and preserving or restoring mobility.”

Most people do not experience pain or other noticeable symptoms. When they are present, typical symptoms can include:

- Fatigue, heaviness and cramping in the leg muscles during activities such as walking or climbing stairs that goes away with rest;
- Foot or toe pain at rest that disturbs sleep; and
- Sores or wounds on toes or feet that are slow to heal.

A simple, painless test called an ankle-brachial index (ABI) can help diagnose P.A.D.

If you're over the age of 50 or have any of the risk factors for P.A.D., talk to your doctor about your risk.

For more information about P.A.D., visit www.aboutpad.org or call the NHLBI Health Information Center at (301) 592-8573 or TTY 240-629-3255.

Healthy Ideas

Between 8 and 12 million Americans over the age of 50 (or one in 20 adults) have P.A.D. African Americans have a higher risk. Fortunately, early detection and treatment can help improve circulation and restore mobility. For more information about P.A.D., visit www.aboutpad.org.

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