



Smoking increases your risk of having an aneurysm. If you are smoking now, the most important step you can take is to **STOP** smoking.

**Ask your doctor for help with quitting.**

**Here are some questions to ask your provider:**

- Should I have this test?
- How would I benefit from having this test?
- Would I be harmed by this test?
- How do I get ready for this test?

*Do you have other questions for your provider? Write them down here.*




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For more information, please speak with your doctor or nurse.



**Heart and Circulation**

Talk With Your Health Care Provider About

**Screening for Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm**



This brochure was produced by:



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
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and

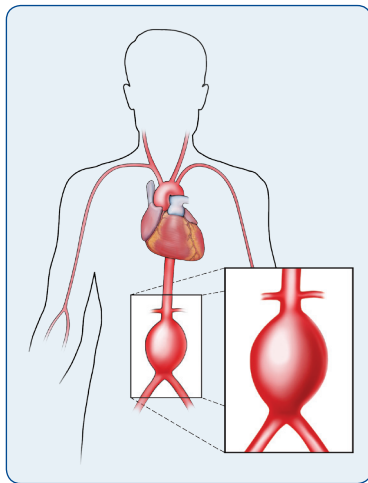


U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
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US Preventive Services Task Force  
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# What is an Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm?

An aneurysm (“AN-yuh-rizm”) is a bulge in a weakened blood vessel. An aneurysm can lead to serious problems.

Your heart pumps blood to the lower part of your body through a large blood vessel called the “abdominal aorta.” If an aneurysm develops here, it is called an abdominal aortic aneurysm.



## Is an Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm serious?

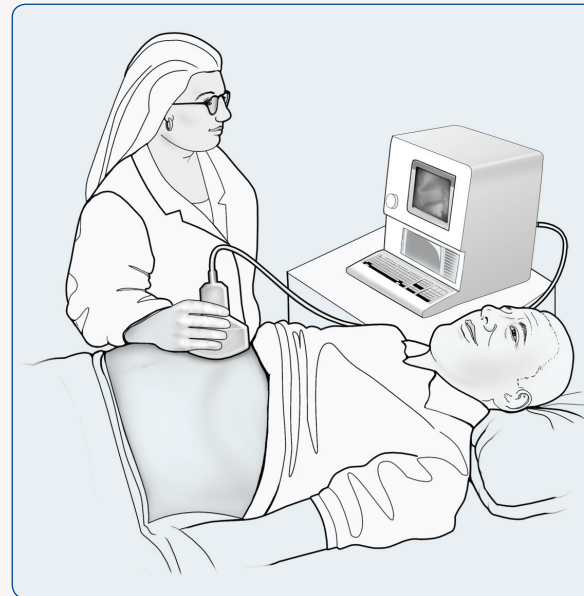
- Most people who have aneurysms don't have any symptoms.
- A large aneurysm can burst. This is very serious, and can even result in death.
- If you have a large aneurysm, you may need surgery. Finding large aneurysms with screening before they burst may make the surgery and recovery easier.

## Who should be screened?

Men between the age of 65 and 75, who have EVER smoked cigarettes, should be screened. Other people do not benefit as much from screening.

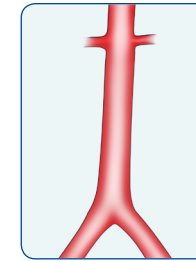
## How is the screening done?

Screening is painless and quick and is usually done at a radiology clinic visit. An ultrasound is used to create a picture of your abdominal aorta using sound waves. The width of your abdominal aorta is then measured to determine whether there is a bulge.



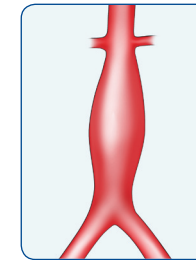
## What happens after screening?

Your next step depends on whether the test finds a bulge in the aorta. If you have a small or medium bulge, your provider may recommend “watchful waiting,” which means having your aneurysm re-checked periodically.



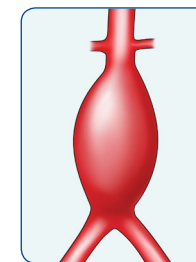
### Normal (No bulge)

Congratulations!  
You don't need to be screened again.



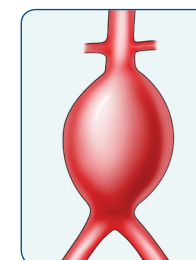
### Small bulge (3.0–3.9 cm)

You should be re-checked in 2–3 years.



### Medium bulge (4.0–5.4 cm)

You and your provider will discuss what to do next. You should probably be re-checked in 6 months.



### Large bulge (more than 5.4 cm)

You and your provider will discuss what to do next. You may need surgery.