

## Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD)

PAD affects approximately 8 million Americans. It usually goes undiagnosed by individuals and even health care providers. The main symptom is pain in the legs or hips during exercise such as walking or climbing stairs. The pain usually goes away with rest but then returns during activity. Sometimes if more severe, the pain may even last upon initiating rest making it even harder to diagnosis.

This pain is in the muscles and not in the joints. The blockage in the blood vessels prevents the blood from getting to the muscles. This is called intermittent claudication. This prevention of blood-flow to the muscle is what causes the pain.

Usually at the doctor visit if PAD is suspected, the physician will check the pulses in the feet and compare them to the pulse in the hands. He or she may also take blood pressures in the feet. Other noninvasive diagnostic treatments may include a doppler (visualizing the artery) or CT scan of the arteries so they can see the arteries in the legs.

### Risk Factors of PAD:

- Smoking
- Physical Inactivity
- Diabetes
- High Blood Pressure
- Obesity
- High Blood Cholesterol

### Treatments include:

- Increased exercise and usually this will be ordered in a supervised program or setting since the pain will increase during activity.
- Diets such as low cholesterol diets
- Smoking cessation programs if appropriate
- Medications
- Angioplasty (an item is inserted into the vessel and a balloon is inflated in the artery to remove the clogged area)
- Peripheral bypass (just like in cardiac bypass- the vessels will be cut and bypassed so blood flow can continue)

If you have these symptoms or more questions or concerns about PAD discuss them with your healthcare provider. As usual, do not start or stop any current programs or practices without first consulting with your physician or healthcare provider. Prevention is always the best medicine so if you don't have the symptoms of PAD however may have some of the risk factors, you can start now with the age – old medicine for almost everything: healthy diet and exercise!

### ***Wellness Information and Webpage by Kathleen Dunkelberger Nursing Consulting Services, LLC***

*This information is for informational and educational purposes only and is not intended to be medical advice. As with any program or information, all individuals are encouraged to seek the advice of their medical practitioner prior to starting or changing any typical practices and for further information regarding their questions, concerns or symptoms.*

Resources: Variety of tools and websites