

Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD): Signs, Symptoms and Risks

What are the signs and symptoms of PAD?

- + Pain, numbness, aching or heaviness in leg muscles when walking or climbing stairs
- + Cramping in the affected leg(s) and buttocks, thighs, calves and feet that eases when at rest
- + Weak or absent pulse in legs or feet
- + Sores or wounds on toes, feet or legs that heal slowly, poorly or not at all
- + A pale or bluish color to skin
- + A lower temperature in one leg compared to the other leg
- + Poor nail growth on toes and decreased leg hair growth
- + Erectile dysfunction, especially among men with diabetes

Many people with PAD don't exhibit symptoms.

Should I get screened for PAD?

You should ask your doctor about a PAD screening if:

- + You are younger than age 50 with diabetes and one or more risk factors
- + You are older than 50 with a history of smoking or diabetes
- + You are older than 65

What are the risk factors for PAD?

Different aspects of your health can increase your risk of PAD, including:

- + Smoking
- + High cholesterol
- + High blood pressure
- + Diabetes
- + Coronary heart disease (or family history of the condition)
- + Stroke (or family history of condition)
- + Renal/kidney disease

By improving these risk factors and leading a healthy lifestyle, you can lower your risk for heart attack, stroke and PAD.