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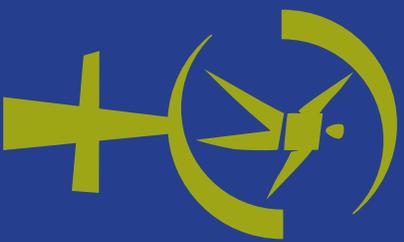
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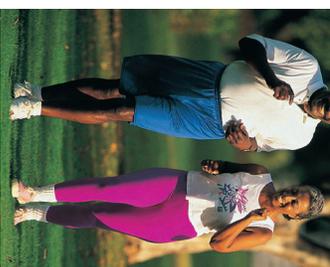
Women and P.A.D. What You Need to DO

“Since my risk for heart attack is increased because of my PAD diagnosis, I am more mindful to follow my medication regimen as well as to watch my diet and increase my exercise. I am doing all that I can to protect my heart and my legs.” - Susan, 54 years old

“Now that I’ve been through the P.A.D. walking program at my local hospital and am taking medications, I feel a lot better. I’m back to my old self.” - Caroline, 60 years old

“My vascular procedure was very successful. Before, I could barely walk for 6 or 7 minutes without pain; now, I’m able to walk every day for at least 30 minutes without any symptoms.” - Barbara, 65 years old

If you have P.A.D., the good news is that early detection and proper treatment can improve your quality of life and prevent the devastating complications of P.A.D. The sooner you talk with your health care provider about your risk factors or symptoms and get treatment, the quicker you’ll be back in circulation.



How is P.A.D. treated?

People with P.A.D. need a comprehensive treatment plan to lower their risk for heart attack and stroke. You can learn more about the following life-saving behaviors by visiting www.padcoalition.org and www.womenheart.org.

- Get help to quit smoking and set a quit date.
- Lower blood pressure to less than 140/90 mmHg or less than 130/80 mmHg if diabetes or chronic kidney disease is present.
- Lower LDL (bad) cholesterol to less than 100 mg/dl for all people with P.A.D. and to less than 70 mg/dl if at very high risk.
- If diabetes is present, manage blood glucose to reach an A1C of less than 7 percent and practice proper foot care.
- Take antiplatelet medications (such as aspirin or clopidogrel).

People with P.A.D. who have symptoms of pain, burning or aching in their legs should get regular physical activity in a prescribed P.A.D. exercise rehabilitation program. Exercise programs are the most effective treatments for P.A.D. symptoms. Medications (such as cilostazol) can also improve walking ability. Endovascular or surgical procedures may also be useful in some individuals and are very successful in treating P.A.D. Procedures such as angioplasty and bypass surgery can improve blood circulation in the legs and the ability to walk.

Remember that having P.A.D. is not the end of the world. With proper treatment and making lifestyle changes, you can improve the health of arteries not only in your legs, but throughout your body. By taking care of P.A.D., you can live longer and lower your risk for heart attack, stroke, amputation or early death.

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Sound familiar? How many times have you heard family members and friends complain about pain in their legs and just chalked it off to “old age?” You’re not alone.

Peripheral arterial disease, or P.A.D., may be the cause of their leg pain. And, according to a recent survey conducted by the P.A.D. Coalition, **only 28 percent of American women have ever heard of P.A.D.**, a common and dangerous disease that affects about nine million Americans, half of whom are women. That’s 1 in 20 over age 50 and 1 in 5 over age 70.

P.A.D. occurs when arteries in the legs become clogged with fatty deposits, reducing blood flow to the legs and causing leg pain when walking. That leg pain you’ve heard your loved ones complain about cannot be ignored. If left untreated, P.A.D. may lead to disability, amputation (losing a foot or leg) and a poor quality of life. Having P.A.D. also means that you are at increased risk for having a heart attack or stroke.

P.A.D., Arteries and Your Heart

Let’s first review how P.A.D. is related to your heart health. What most people don’t know is that the blocked arteries found in people with P.A.D. can be a **red flag that other arteries, including those in the heart and brain, may also be blocked.** Therefore, having P.A.D. markedly increases your risk for heart attack, stroke and death. For a long time, women tended to ignore heart disease. They thought it was a “man’s disease” even though it was the Number One killer of American women. While many women now know about the risk factors for heart disease – high blood pressure, not exercising, high cholesterol, high blood fats and

high blood sugar -- most women are not aware that **if you have P.A.D., you are at increased risk for heart disease and stroke.** In fact, P.A.D. is caused by the very same conditions and lifestyle behaviors that cause heart disease and stroke.

P.A.D. and Your Legs

P.A.D. develops slowly over many years. In the early stages, most people with P.A.D. have no symptoms. Only about one out of three people with P.A.D. actually feel there is something wrong with their feet or legs. The most common signs of P.A.D. include one or more of these problems:

- Cramps, tiredness or pain in your legs, thighs or buttocks that always happens when you walk but that goes away when you rest. This is called claudication (pronounced as ‘klo ‘di-ka ‘shen’).
- Foot or toe pain at rest that often disturbs your sleep.
- Skin wounds or ulcers on your feet or toes that are slow to heal (or that do not heal for 8 to 12 weeks).

Having leg symptoms can make it difficult for you to do any activity that involves walking and can make life miserable. Therefore, P.A.D. can have a big impact on your quality of life.

Now is the time to learn about P.A.D. and what you and your loved ones can do to prevent or treat it. Start by taking the P.A.D. Quiz.

P.A.D. Quiz

- 1. Who is more likely to have P.A.D.?** (Check all that apply)
 - People over age 50
 - People who smoke
 - People who have high blood pressure
 - People of African descent
 - People who have diabetes
 - People who have a family history of P.A.D.
 - People who have a history of heart disease
- 2. Who can diagnose P.A.D.?** (Check all that apply)
 - A doctor
 - A nurse
 - A dentist
 - A vascular disease specialist
 - A physician assistant
- 3. What test is often used to diagnose P.A.D.?** (Check all that apply)
 - A blood pressure test
 - An ankle-brachial index (ABI) test
 - A blood test
 - A urine test
- 4. Besides leg pain, what are other symptoms of P.A.D.?** (Check all that apply)
 - Chest pain
 - Joint pain
 - Feeling tired or fatigued
 - Skin wounds or ulcers on your feet or toes that are slow to heal
- 5. Which of these symptoms are most common in people with P.A.D.?** (Check all that apply)
 - Getting massaged
 - Controlling high blood pressure
 - Getting help with walking
 - Lowering LDL cholesterol
 - Taking aspirin
 - Participating in physical activity
- 6. What can people do to prevent or treat P.A.D.?** (Check all that apply)
 - Get help to quit smoking
 - Control your blood pressure
 - Lower your LDL cholesterol
 - Manage your diabetes
 - Follow a heart-healthy diet
 - Get regular exercise