



Facts About Peripheral Arterial Disease (P.A.D.) for African Americans

One in every 20 Americans over the age of 50 has P.A.D., a condition that raises the risk for heart attack and stroke.

Peripheral arterial disease, or P.A.D., develops when your arteries become clogged with plaque—fatty deposits that limit blood flow to your limbs, especially your legs. **Just like clogged arteries in the heart, clogged arteries in the legs mean you are at risk for having a heart attack or stroke.**

P.A.D. is more common in African Americans than any other racial or ethnic group. This may be in part because some of the conditions that raise the risk for developing P.A.D., such as diabetes and high blood pressure, are more common among African Americans.

Plaque buildup in the legs does not always cause symptoms, so many people can have P.A.D. and not know it. People who do experience symptoms, such as pain or cramping in the legs, often do not report them, believing they are a natural part of aging or due to another cause. In all, P.A.D. affects 8 to 12 million people in the United States, especially those over 50.

You can lower your risk for P.A.D. This fact sheet answers key questions about P.A.D. and provides steps you can take to reduce your risk. Timely detection and treatment of P.A.D. can improve the quality of your life; help you keep your independence and mobility; and reduce your risk of heart attack, stroke, leg amputation, and even death. Taking steps to learn about P.A.D., including asking your health care provider to check your risk, can help you stay in circulation longer to enjoy your life.



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