

## September is Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD) Awareness Month

ST. PAUL, MN - September is PAD Awareness Month, reminding us that the number of Americans suffering from this life threatening disease (18 million)<sup>1</sup> is greater than those suffering from stroke (6.8 million)<sup>2</sup>, cancer (13 million)<sup>3</sup>, and coronary artery disease (16.3 million)<sup>4</sup>. In fact, 1 in 3 American's over the age of 50 with a history of diabetes or smoking have PAD as well as 1 in 3 American's over the age of 70<sup>5</sup>. To complicate matters, it is estimated that 3 out of 4 patients with PAD also have coronary disease. Left untreated, the five-year mortality rate is 30 percent<sup>6</sup>, exceeding rates for prostate cancer (~1%)<sup>7</sup>, breast cancer (11 percent)<sup>8</sup>, and hodgkin's disease (15 percent)<sup>9</sup>.

PAD develops when plaque, like calcium, builds up along blood vessel walls, narrowing the arteries and reducing blood flow to the legs and feet. If PAD progresses to Critical Limb Ischemia, the most severe and potentially deadly form of PAD, the blood vessels become dangerously narrow and can result in extreme pain, loss of a pulse in feet or legs, and wounds that will not heal. In 25 percent of these cases, amputation of toes, the foot or leg is necessary<sup>10</sup>.

Despite the severity and prevalence of PAD, less than 30 percent of Americans are familiar with it, making it the most serious disease with the lowest level of public awareness. A key element in addressing PAD is to better understand the risk factors. The most common indications and symptoms include:

- Leg discomfort that occurs when walking and disappears at rest
- Tired legs, cramping, heaviness or coldness in the lower legs
- Non-healing wounds on the legs or feet
- Foot or toe discomfort or numbness at rest that may disrupt sleep

The good news is that PAD is treatable, especially if detected early. That's why companies like SureFit, a division of Hanger, and BioMedix are committed to enhancing the delivery of care through PADnet collaborative care networks.

PADnet networks facilitate improved care coordination, encouraging a full spectrum of treatment protocols to be leveraged. According to Dr. James F. McGuckin, Jr., Founder of Vascular Access Centers, Co-Founder of Rex Medical, and Director of the Philadelphia Vascular Institute, "A range of treatment options are available to us depending on the timing of detection. Lifestyle modifications such as smoking cessation, diet and supervised exercise and the use of protective footwear such as diabetic shoes, inserts and compression socks are key. Medications such as blood thinners can also be effective for many people. As the disease progresses, minimally invasive vascular procedures are available to restore blood flow to limbs in an effort to prevent an amputation, stroke or heart attack."

To learn more, please contact your doctor or reach out to your SureFit or BioMedix representative.

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