

## Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD)

Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD), alternatively called Peripheral Vascular Disease (PVD), is a common circulatory problem affecting 20% of people aged over 60 years. It is characterised by the normal structure and function of the arteries other than those that supply the heart or brain becoming abnormal. Typically, the arteries become slowly affected by atherosclerosis –fatty deposits- over many years that eventually leads to narrowing or ‘furring up of the arteries’. As the narrowing tightens blood flow to the organs or legs becomes increasingly compromised and may not be able to meet the demand required for normal function: chronic ischaemia.

One of the first symptoms of PAD you may experience is intermittent claudication: pain or cramp in your leg muscle when you walk which is relieved when you stop. This is caused by inadequate blood flow to the legs. Other body organs affected include the kidneys (renal artery stenosis) and the gut (mesenteric ischaemia).

In addition, PAD is a marker for increased risk of cardiovascular events e.g. stroke, heart attack, even when it is not causing symptoms, and thus its early identification and management is vitally important to reduce the risk of subsequent serious illness.

*'All clients with PVD should be offered an anti-platelet therapy and a statin unless contraindicated and have appropriate measures recommended to control hypertension and diabetes'*

**CIRCULATION CLINIC**  
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