

# Things People Should Know About Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD)

In the Clinic  
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Peripheral artery disease (PAD) is a form of atherosclerosis that involves the arteries of the legs. In atherosclerosis, the arteries become narrowed or clogged with a gradual buildup of fat and other substances. PAD can cause leg pain that can limit walking and sores on the legs or feet that are slow to heal.

## Internet Sites with Good Information about PAD

Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD) Coalition  
[www.padcoalition.org](http://www.padcoalition.org)

MedlinePlus  
[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000170.htm](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000170.htm)

American Heart Organization  
[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

## HEALTH TIPS\* What You Can Do

- Having peripheral artery disease (PAD) means that not enough blood is flowing to your legs, feet, or toes.
- PAD can make your legs hurt when walking and can damage them if it gets worse.

### Here's what **you** can do to help keep PAD from getting worse:

#### Don't smoke and stay away from those who do

- Smoking makes PAD worse.
- Breathing smoke from others is almost as bad smoking yourself.

#### Walk

- Walking is a good treatment for PAD.
- Start out slowly and walk a little more each week.
- A good goal is to walk 30 minutes, 5 days a week.
- If your legs hurt while walking, stop, rest, and start walking again.

#### Wear good shoes

- Wear shoes that are strong enough to keep your feet and toes safe if you bump them.
- Wear shoes that don't rub or hurt your feet.

#### Check your feet and toes every day

- Look for red spots, black spots or sores.

#### Call Your Doctor right away if you have:

- Pain in your legs when you are not walking
- No feeling in your feet
- Sores on the feet or legs

### Things to ask your **doctor** about PAD:

- What might help me stop smoking?
- Is it OK to keep going even if my legs hurt when walking?
- Are there any medicines that can help? Will I need surgery?
- Can changing what I eat help? If so, what should I eat? Will losing weight help?
- Is my bad cholesterol high? (High levels of bad cholesterol make PAD worse.)
- Is my blood pressure OK? (High blood pressure makes PAD worse.)
- Is my blood sugar OK? (High blood sugar makes PAD worse.)
- Why is it so important to treat PAD? (Treating PAD can cut the risk of heart attack and stroke.)

\*HEALTH TIPS are developed by the American College of Physicians Foundation and PIER