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
- MedlinePlus
- American Heart Organization
  - www.amanheart.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 as 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*