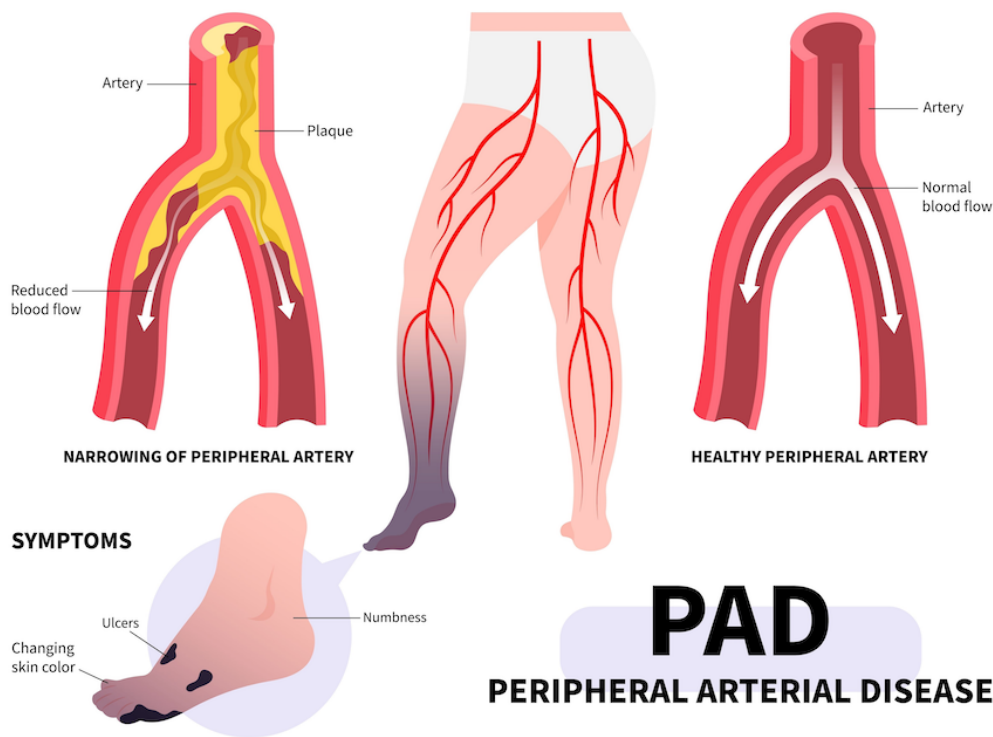


The Link Between PAD and Smoking

Peripheral artery disease, also called PAD, happens when arteries become narrow or blocked. Arteries are blood vessels that carry blood to your body. PAD makes it harder for blood to reach your legs and feet. This can cause pain, cramping, or wounds that heal slowly.

PAD and smoking are closely linked. Smoking tobacco products, like cigarettes, lowers oxygen in the blood and damages blood vessels. This makes it harder for blood to flow to your arms, legs, and other parts of your body, such as your brain or heart arteries.

Over time, reduced blood flow to your legs or arms can lead to serious problems. These can include pain, wounds that will not heal, and even loss of limbs.



With PAD, poor blood flow can cause pain and damage to your legs, feet, arms, and hands.

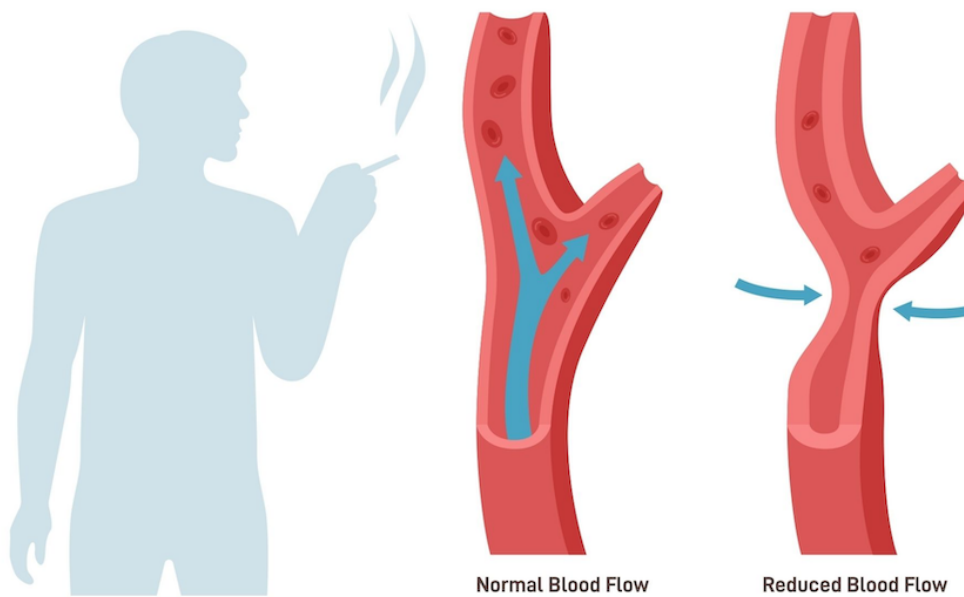
Why Smoking Causes PAD

Smoking is one of the biggest causes of PAD because it harms the inside of blood vessels, raises blood pressure, and lowers blood oxygen. This makes PAD worse and harder to treat.

Your risk for PAD rises if you also have:

- High blood pressure
- High blood sugar or diabetes
- High cholesterol
- Obesity
- Poor circulation
- Chronic inflammation
- If you are a male
- If you are over 40

Smoking contributes to some of these conditions or makes them worse.



Smoking narrows blood vessels, which can lead to PAD.

Signs and Symptoms

Peripheral Artery Disease

- Leg pain while walking that goes away with rest
- Numbness or tingling in the feet or toes
- Wounds on feet or legs that heal slowly
- Cold feet or toes
- Skin discoloration, including blue toes
- Dry, shiny, or hairless skin
- Weak pulse in legs or feet

Smoking-Related Symptoms

- Shortness of breath
- Cough or wheezing
- Chest pain
- Lower stamina or energy

What Can Happen If Not Treated

If PAD and smoking are not managed, you may face:

- Skin infections that can spread quickly
- Tissue damage that leads to wounds or sores
- Pain when walking or even at rest
- Amputation, or loss of a foot or leg
- Stroke or heart attack
- Emergency hospital care

Daily Care Tips

- **Check your feet daily:** Look for cuts, blisters, or color changes.

- **Keep feet clean and dry:** Wash with mild soap and warm water. Dry well.
- **Use lotion:** Lotion can prevent dry, cracked skin. Avoid putting lotion between your toes.
- **Wear socks and shoes:** Protect your feet from injury.
- **Trim toenails with care:** Ask for help if needed.

Habits

- **Avoid smoking:** Every cigarette harms your arteries and lungs.
- **Monitor your levels:** Track your blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol.
- **Stay active:** Walking helps improve blood flow.
- **Eat healthy:** Choose fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins.



Smoking is the main risk factor for PAD. Your care team can help you quit.

Your Care Team

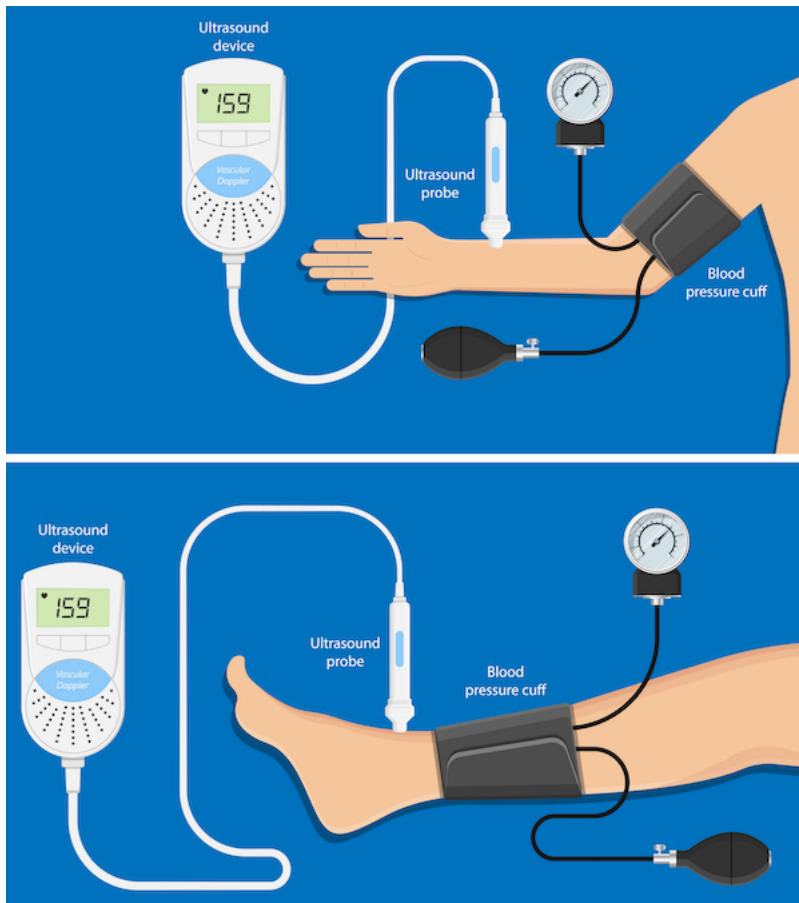
Your care team may include:

- **Primary care team:** Helps manage daily health and screenings
- **Cardiologist:** Treats heart and blood vessel problems

- **Vascular surgeon:** Helps with serious artery problems
- **Podiatrist:** Checks feet and skin for signs of PAD
- **Smoking cessation support:** Helps you quit tobacco with tools and support

How Your Care Team Helps

- **Routine checkups:** Your care team checks your blood flow, looks for new problems, and keeps your care plan up-to-date.
- **Bloodwork:** These lab tests check cholesterol, sugar, and oxygen levels.
- **Circulation testing:** This includes a simple test called the ankle-brachial index, or ABI. It compares the blood pressure in your ankle and arm to check for PAD.



The ankle-brachial index is a simple blood pressure test to check for PAD.

- **Specialist referrals:** Your care team may refer you to an expert in eye, foot, kidney, heart, or lung care.
- **Support programs:** These can help you quit smoking or make lifestyle changes.

Treatments

Treatments may include:

- Blood pressure medicine
- Cholesterol-lowering medicine
- Blood thinners
- Foot care treatments
- Surgery or stents to open blocked arteries
- Nicotine replacement and quitting aids for smoking

Prevention and Long-Term Care

- **Follow your care plan:** Take all medicine as prescribed.
- **Track your health:** Keep your blood pressure and blood sugar in a healthy range.
- **Check your body:** Look daily for wounds, color changes, or swelling.
- **Make healthy choices:** Eat well, stay active, and avoid smoking.
- **Report changes early:** Call your care team if you notice pain, wounds, or swelling.

What to Expect

Managing PAD and quitting smoking takes time, practice, and support. You may need:

- Regular checkups with your care team
- Tests or scans to check blood flow or heart health



- Changes in medicine over time
- Extra support to quit smoking and stay active

Having more than one health condition can feel hard. You are not alone. Your care team is here to help you one step at a time.

Questions to Ask Your Care Team

- What numbers should I track and how often?
- What foods and activities are best for me?
- How often do I need checkups or tests?
- When should I see a specialist?
- What signs should I watch for at home?

Thank You for Choosing Us

Thank you for trusting us with your care. We are here to support you and want you to feel your best. Contact us with any questions.

IF YOU HAVE A MEDICAL EMERGENCY, CALL 911 OR GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM.

The information presented is intended for general information and educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care provider. Contact your health care provider if you believe you have a health problem.

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