Peripheral Artery Disease in American Indians

What is Peripheral Artery Disease?

Peripheral artery disease (PAD) is the blockage of a blood vessel outside of the heart by fatty plaque.

A blockage that goes untreated can lead to the loss of a limb.

American Indians have one of the highest rates of PAD in the United States.¹

Even though Native women are more likely to have PAD than men, more men die of PAD than women.²

Diabetes and PAD

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American Indians have diabetes.⁴

Diabetics are:

5-10X

More likely to lose a leg from PAD than non-diabetics.³

PAD from diabetes is the most common cause of amputation in the US and American Indians are 4 times more likely to have an amputation than Whites.⁷
How do you know if you have PAD?

Leg pain with walking or at rest (Claudication)
Wounds that won’t heal
Color changes in your legs
Foot coolness
Loss of hair in the legs or foot

PAD that is found in late stages often ends in amputation. However, early detection can prevent limb loss. 

3/4 People with PAD don’t know they have it until damage occurs, which is why screenings are important.

Guidelines state:
That anyone who meets one or more of these criteria should be screened for PAD.

Leg pain with walking
Non-healing wounds
Age 65+

Everyone over 50 with:
Diabetes, kidney problems or smokes tobacco

How to Reduce Your Risk of PAD

Smoking
DON’T SMOKE
Smoking is the #1 correctable risk factor for PAD.
American Indians have the highest smoking rates in the US.

Diabetes
Keep your blood sugar at normal levels
Protect your feet
Maintain healthy weight
Control your blood pressure
Talk to your doctor about a foot exam

Be Active
Take simple steps to avoid inactivity:
Walk more often
Use the stairs
Park your car farther away from the entrance
Make time for physical activity

Healthy Living
Eat a heart-healthy diet
Avoid fried and processed foods
Reduce consumption of sugars
Eat less salt

To learn more about heart disease, visit: your-heart-health.com