

Minimally Invasive Procedures for Improving Circulation to the Legs



Your community, not for profit health partner

www.sentara.com/vascular



What is Vascular Disease?

Peripheral arteries carry blood to the extremities, such as the legs and feet. When these blood vessels become clogged with calcium deposits it narrows the passageway. The medical name for this hardening of the arteries (arteriosclerosis) is Peripheral Vascular Disease (PVD) or Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD). This condition decreases the blood flow to the nerves and tissues, affecting 8 to 12 million Americans with pain in the legs, ulcers, wounds that will not heal and even more serious complications.

Signs and Symptoms of Lower Leg Blockages

PVD commonly affects the legs and feet first. Experiencing pain in the upper or lower leg while walking, even a short distance, may be the initial symptom. Slow or non-healing of wounds on the feet and legs may be another visual symptom.

Are You At Risk?

Although anyone could develop PVD, people with the following conditions may be at greater risk:

- High Blood Pressure
- Elevated Cholesterol
- Smoking or History of Smoking
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Family History of Heart or Vascular Disease
- Aging, generally over 50

How Is It Diagnosed?

If you have symptoms or are at risk for PVD, talk with your physician. After your visit, your physician may recommend you see a vascular specialist surgeon and/or undergo testing to diagnose the lower extremity leg blockages. Testing may include an ultrasound or an angiogram (an X-ray of the blood vessels after an injection of a radiopaque substance).

Minimally Invasive Treatment Procedures

If you are diagnosed with PVD which requires surgical intervention, be assured that the vascular specialist surgeons at Sentara use the latest advances in technology, including minimally invasive surgery (or endovascular) techniques.

There are many patient benefits including: smaller incisions, less blood loss and postoperative pain, fewer complications, faster recovery times and a reduced hospital stay, replacing a 10-day hospital stay with a 1 to 2 day stay.

Sentara vascular specialist surgeons have many treatment technologies available to help restore the blood flow to the legs and feet of patients with clogged arteries from PVD. The size, location and type of blockage(s) determines the best minimally invasive treatment option for each individual patient. All of these techniques use a catheter that is inserted through a small incision in the upper leg or groin area.

■ CliRpath Laser Procedure

For this technique, a catheter is used to release laser energy pulses that vaporize the plaque and restores blood flow to the leg.

■ Silver Hawk/Fox Hollow

This technology uses a catheter that contains a rotating, tiny blade at the tip to smoothly and precisely shave-off and remove the plaque causing the blockage.

■ Balloon Angioplasty

A catheter is threaded up through the artery to the point of the blockage in order to inflate a balloon at the tip of the catheter that forces the plaque to the sides, opening the blockage.

■ Subintimal Angioplasty

A catheter is threaded up through the artery to the point of the blockage and is passed through the blocked artery wall to form a new opening and restore circulation.

■ Stent

Often after balloon angioplasty has newly opened a blockage, the vessel requires a stent for reinforcement. A stent is made of flexible, mesh metal material that fits in to the artery wall to keep it open.

More Information

For more information on vascular diseases and treatment options or for a referral to a vascular specialist, visit www.sentara.com/vascular or call 1-800-SENTARA.

State-of-the-art procedures such as these for PVD are just one part of the services performed at Sentara's vascular surgery program. To learn more about the vascular program at Sentara, call 1-800-SENTARA or visit www.sentara.com/vascular.