

Peripheral Vascular Disease (PVD)

When the arteries of the legs become blocked your legs and feet will not receive enough blood supply. The cause of the blockage is a build-up of plaque in the artery affected, this build-up is referred to as atherosclerosis. The plaque consists of a collection of fibrous tissue, cholesterol and calcium which can harden over time. You may be experiencing discomfort or pain when you walk; this pain can occur in your hips, thighs, knees, shins or upper feet. An examination by your surgeon will be done to rule out other possible causes of the pain. Most patients can be treated without intervention but may be started on blood thinners and medications to treat the atherosclerosis. Other patients with severe cases may require surgical treatment. The type of surgical treatment required will depend on the site of the narrowing and the severity, your surgeon will discuss the type of treatment that best suits you.

Some patients develop symptoms like these below as the blockage increases;

- › Claudication: a crampy pain that develops when walking and occurs at a certain distance, usually affecting the calves but resolves when you rest.
- › Rest pain: constant pain in the feet day and night.
- › Gangrene: caused from lack of the blood supply causing blackened discolouration of the toes or feet as tissue dies.

Treatment

If intervention is required please seek information on the following types of treatments available.

- › Angiogram
- › Angioplasty and/or stenting
- › Bypass Surgery

Risk factors for peripheral vascular disease

- › Diabetes
- › Smoking
- › Family history of peripheral vascular disease
- › High blood pressure
- › Elevated cholesterol level

