



American Heart Association.

PAD PATIENT/HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL Discussion Guide

Prepare so you can get the most out of your appointment.



Learn as much as you can about your condition.



Know your symptoms and your family's health history.



Highlight or check off questions to ask your doctor.

Be sure to discuss your family history of heart disease (including PAD), diabetes, kidney disease, high blood pressure or high cholesterol and if you have ever smoked.

PAD can often be misdiagnosed, and you may need to bring up vascular concerns or ask to see a vascular specialist.

The most common PAD symptoms are burning, aching, cramping, numbness, fatigue or discomfort in your leg or hip muscles while walking.

Bring a list of questions.

Getting information from your health care professional about PAD is important. Check off the questions you want to ask during your appointment.

Living with PAD:

What's the likelihood my symptoms will get worse or better? What could progression look like?

What other lifestyle changes do you recommend?

Will changing my diet help? Should I be referred to a dietitian?

Can medication help me?

How often do I need to visit a doctor to monitor my condition? Do I need to see a vascular specialist or surgeon? What's the difference?

What are the danger signs that mean I should call a doctor right away?

Can a walking regimen stop my PAD symptoms from progressing, and should we try this first?

If I have diabetes, do I need to monitor my blood sugar beyond my A1C every 90 days to avoid further damage to my vascular system? Do I need to be referred to an endocrinologist?

Learning about treatment:

What are the best available treatments for me (i.e., exercising, eating a healthy diet and not smoking or using tobacco)?

How is blood flow measured? How will I know when I need more advanced care or treatment? Do I need other arteries checked?

What are surgical intervention options versus non-surgical?

What medications are used to treat PAD?

If a surgical procedure is recommended, how long will it last?

Will treatment "cure" me?

How will I know what's right for me?

What would be the next procedure if symptoms such as pain at rest return?

For more information about peripheral artery disease, go to [heart.org/PAD](https://www.heart.org/PAD).