



Creating Change in Your Community

Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD)
Lower Extremity Amputations
Heat Map Activation Guide

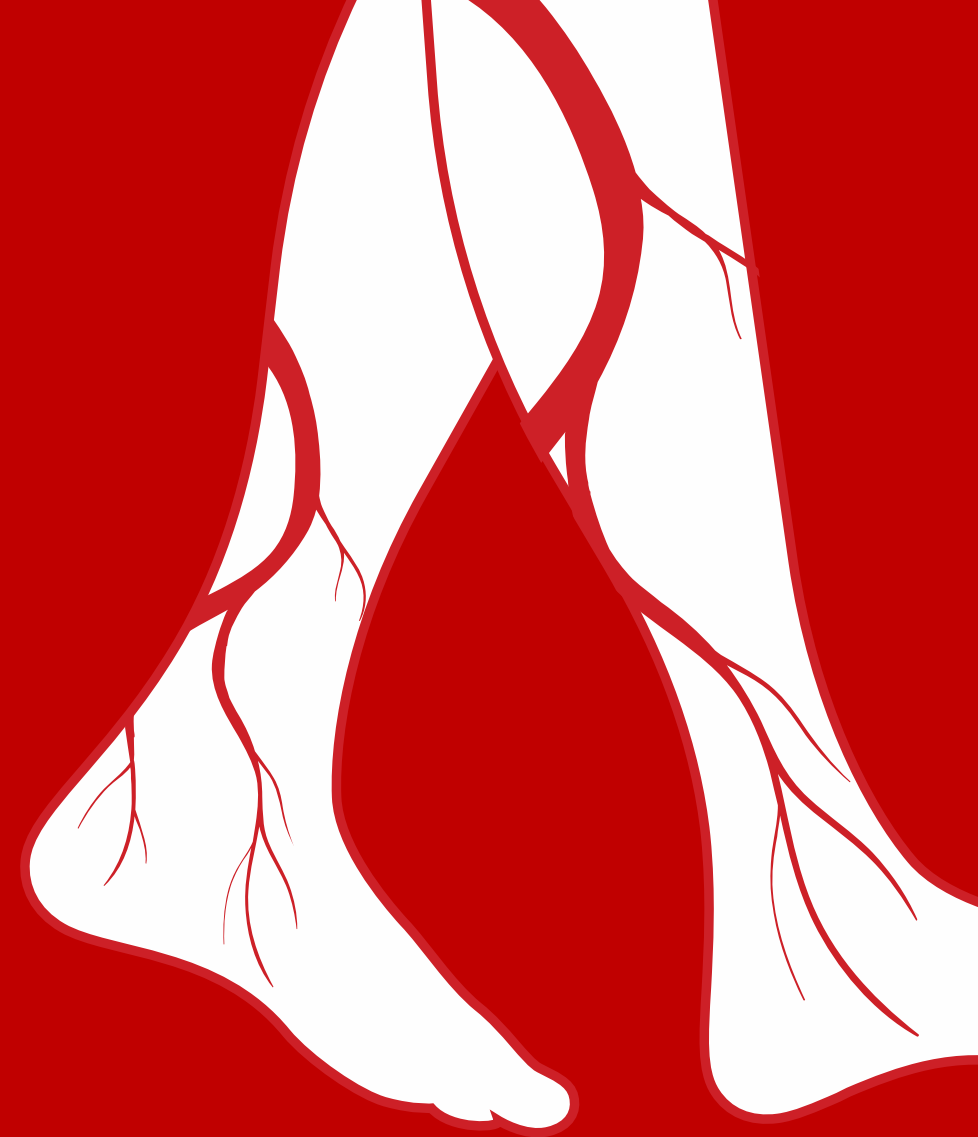


This activation guide is a resource for anyone advocating for increased awareness surrounding PAD, the disparities that exist and creating change.

Once you have gone through the guide, you will be equipped to utilize the PAD Lower Extremity Amputations Heat Map as a tool to facilitate conversations about the amputation epidemic with health care professionals, the public, elected officials, patients with PAD, and high-risk populations.

Within this guide, you will find...

- ✓ Why disparities in PAD amputations matter.
- ✓ What the PAD Lower Extremity Amputations Heat Map is.
- ✓ What health care professionals need to know about PAD.
- ✓ Resources to educate patients, caregivers and the public about PAD.
- ✓ Your community-based ABI screening information.
- ✓ Marketing that your organization can utilize to drive action.
- ✓ Ways to get involved - PAD Collaborative information.
- ✓ Additional resources.



Why PAD and amputation disparities matter

The Heat Map was developed to illustrate the disparities that exist in at-risk communities related to peripheral artery disease (PAD) in an effort to reduce amputations and other complications related to PAD.

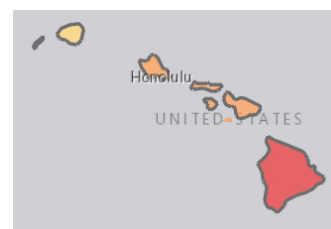
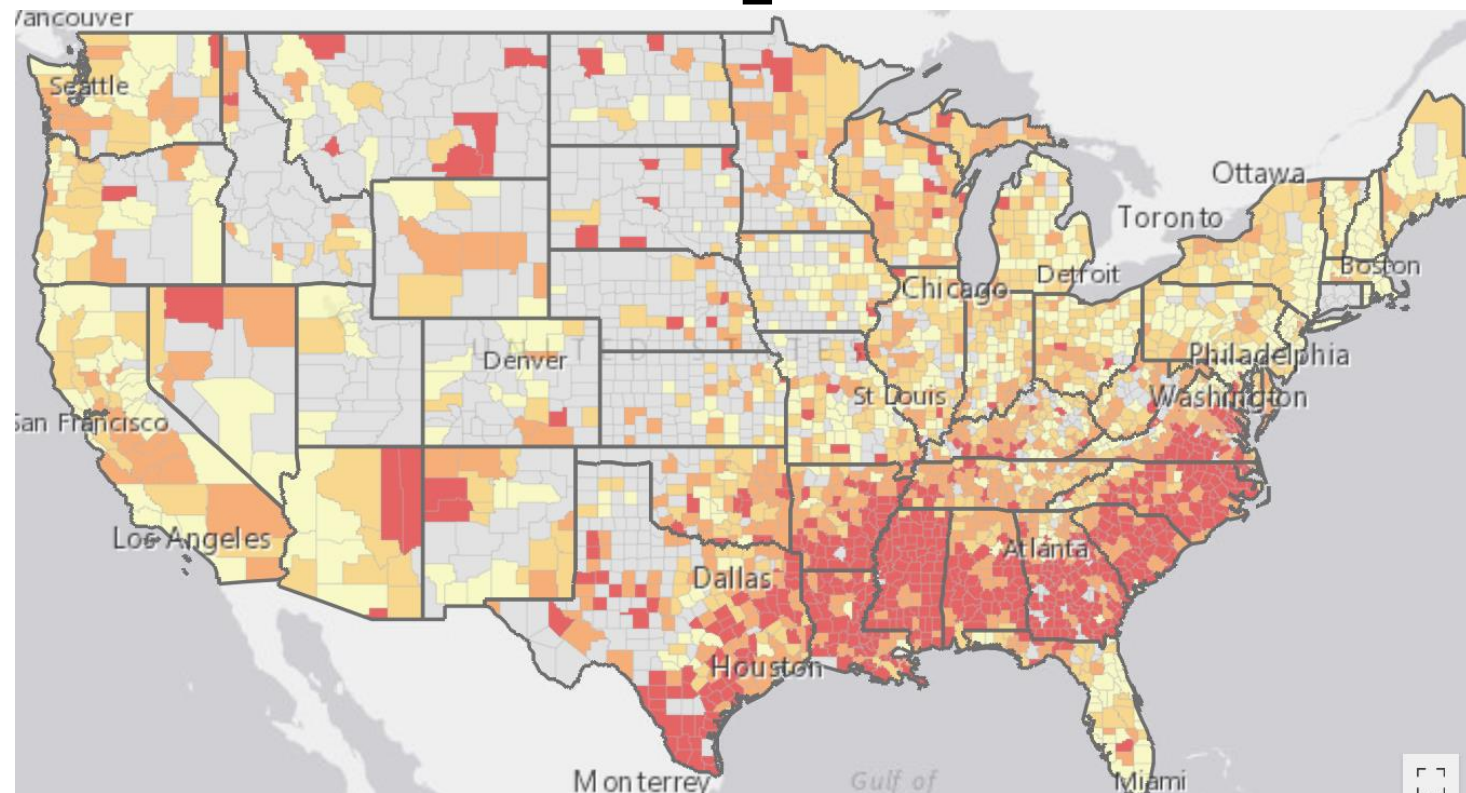
PAD affects more than 10-12 million people in the U.S., the majority 65 years and older. Pain and discomfort in the feet, legs, thighs or butt, may be a sign of a serious health problem. Many adults in the U.S. are getting unnecessary amputations of their toes, feet or legs because of the undetected disease, PAD.

A lack of awareness surrounding PAD exists. Increased communication and education with at-risk populations, other health professionals, policymakers and other key stakeholders can help increase overall awareness of PAD and the management of risk factors, including amputation.

Goal: A new interactive online map has been developed to bring awareness to lower limb amputation, a potential and serious complication for people living with peripheral artery disease (PAD).

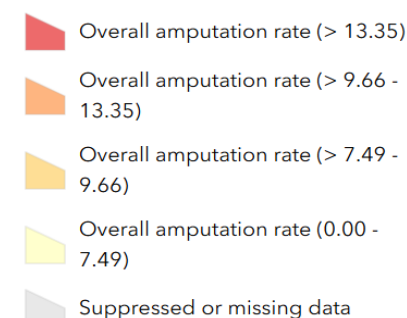
Utilize the map as a tool to advocate for awareness, increased communication and education surrounding amputation disparities to improve health outcomes in communities of highest need.

Lower Extremity Amputations heat map



Amputation Rate per 1,000

Category Rate

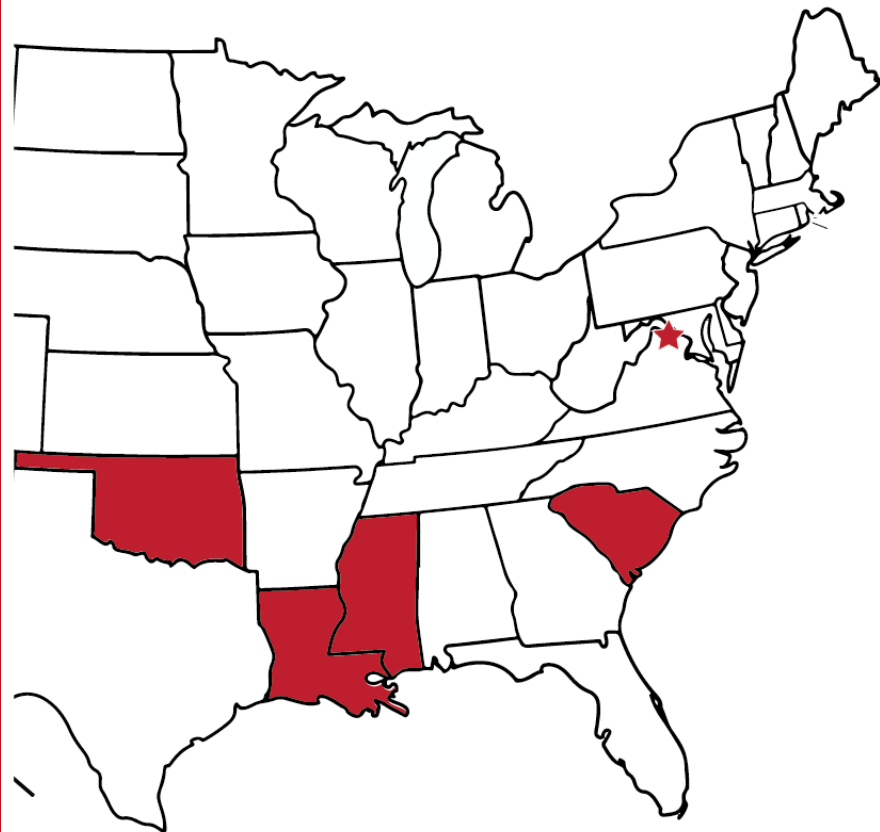


The purpose of the [PAD Lower Extremity Amputations Heat Map](#) is to spread awareness and assist advocacy efforts to reduce lower extremity amputations. The interactive heat map shows the number of people in each congressional district and county who experienced lower limb amputation — a serious complication of PAD — within five years of being diagnosed with PAD.

The map also includes filters to explore demographic characteristics, such as age, race/ethnicity and gender, allowing users to better understand trends in PAD outcomes across different populations.

About the Data: Medicare and US Census Bureau data were used to create this heat map. Amputation rate is defined as the number of lower limb amputations per 1,000 Medicare patients with PAD.

Where you live impacts PAD outcomes



Not unlike other health conditions, inequities exist when it comes to PAD from delay in diagnosis to treatment outcomes. Other factors include:

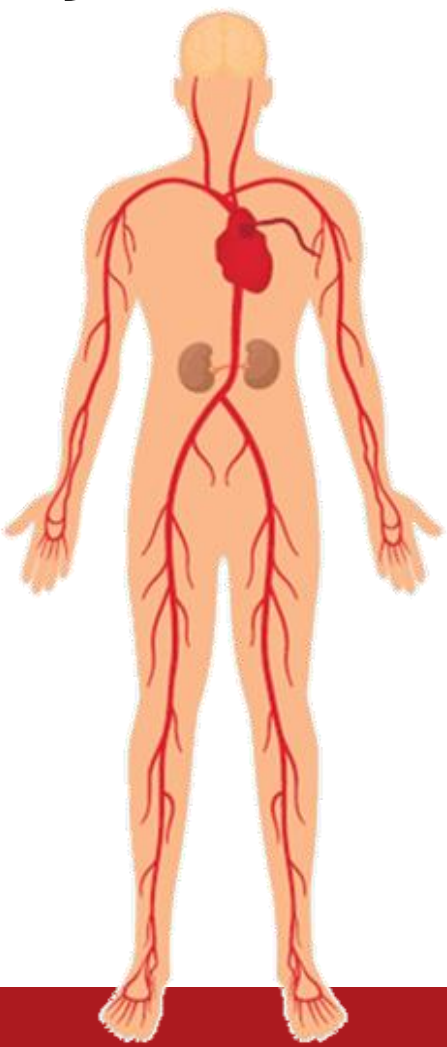
- **Geography**- States with the highest rates of lower limb amputation include Mississippi, D.C., Louisiana, South Carolina, and Oklahoma.
- **Race and Ethnicity**- Rural, African American and American Indian populations are at highest risk for PAD. Black patients have a 2-to-4-fold higher risk of amputation compared with white patients.
- **Social Drivers of Health**
 - ☐ Poor access to healthcare
 - ☐ Lower quality education and poor health literacy
 - ☐ Low income and less access to quality housing
 - ☐ Limited access to quality food
 - ☐ Limited physical activity and exercise
 - ☐ Impact of health on jobs and workplaces
 - ☐ Inadequate health insurance
 - ☐ Chronic stress

How PAD-related risk amplifiers and health disparities increase risk of major events*



PAD Risk Amplifiers

- Older Age (e.g., > 75 years) and Geriatric Syndromes (e.g., frailty, mobility impairment)
- Diabetes
- Ongoing Smoking and Other Tobacco Use
- Chronic Kidney Disease and End-Stage Kidney Disease
- Polyvascular Disease (i.e., coexisting atherosclerotic heart-brain-leg cardiovascular disease)
- Microvascular Disease (retinopathy, neuropathy, nephropathy)
- Depression



Health Contributors

- Geography (i.e., rural location with less access to healthcare)
- Race and Ethnicity (especially Black, Hispanic, American Indian individuals)
- Implicit Bias
- Social Drivers of Health

Social Drivers of Health

- Chronic Stress
- Lower Quality Education and Poor Health Literacy
- Lower Income and Less Access to Quality Housing
- Limited Access to Quality Food and Exercise
- Inadequate Health Insurance
- Poor Access to Healthcare (preventative care, diagnosis, treatment, revascularizations)
- Impact of Health on Jobs/Workplace

Abbreviations: PAD indicates peripheral artery disease; *MACE, major adverse cardiovascular events; and *MALE, major adverse limb events.

Reaching the health care professional audience

Health care professionals are the first line of defense when individuals have symptoms of PAD and need to be diagnosed. The Heat Map should be utilized as a tool to advocate for individuals living in the highest risk areas.



What **non-vascular** health professionals need to know about PAD

Health care professionals:

- ✓ Work with your patients and their caregivers using culturally appropriate patient education so they understand the risk factors, signs, symptoms and treatments for PAD.
- ✓ Your patients who smoke and/or have diabetes are at increased risk for PAD and need to be screened regularly to help decrease the risks associated with PAD, including amputation.
- ✓ Patients may have symptoms that appear to signal a PAD diagnosis, such as leg pain, claudication or nonhealing wound. PAD can also be asymptomatic.
- ✓ Diagnosing PAD begins with a medical history and physical examination, which must include an inspection of the person's feet without shoes and socks.
- ✓ Familiarize yourself with the [Lower Extremity Amputations Heat Map](#) to learn where your patient-base falls regarding risks.
- ✓ For professional resources: [Peripheral Artery Disease \(PAD\) for Professionals - Professional Heart Daily | American Heart Association](#)

Educate your patients and screen those who are at increased risk.

*Utilize the heat map and other resources to educate them on amputation and the risk in your region.
Participate in CME education focused on PAD and become a member of the PAD Collaborative.*

What **vascular health professionals** **need to know about PAD**

Health care professionals:

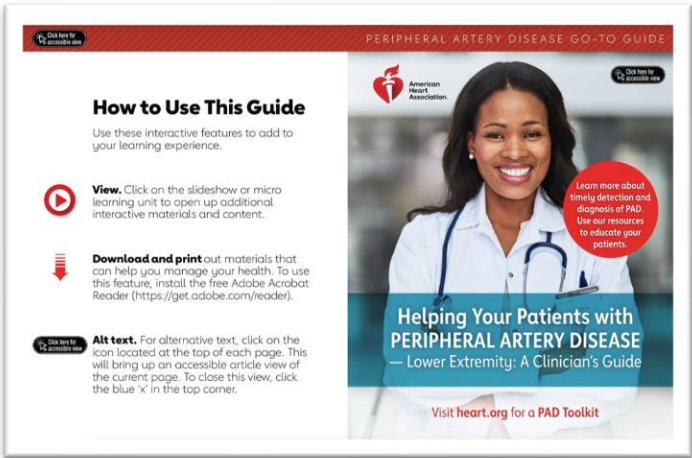
- ✓ A lack of awareness surrounding PAD exists. Increased communication and education with at-risk populations, other health professionals, policymakers and other key stakeholders can help increase overall awareness of PAD and the management of risk factors, including amputation.
- ✓ Primary care professionals and public health clinics need support and communication about appropriate diagnostic testing and treatment of vascular disease.
- ✓ You can be a part of the solution for patients all over the U.S.
- ✓ Some suggestions to reduce the incidence of amputation in patients with PAD include efforts to improve data collection, new modules for payment and care, better public policy, and greater awareness among expert organizations, government agencies and the media.
- ✓ Familiarize yourself with the [Lower Extremity Amputations Heat Map](#) to learn where your patient-base falls regarding risks.
- ✓ For professional resources: [Peripheral Artery Disease \(PAD\) for Professionals - Professional Heart Daily | American Heart Association](#)

Be specific in discussions with health care professionals and policymakers

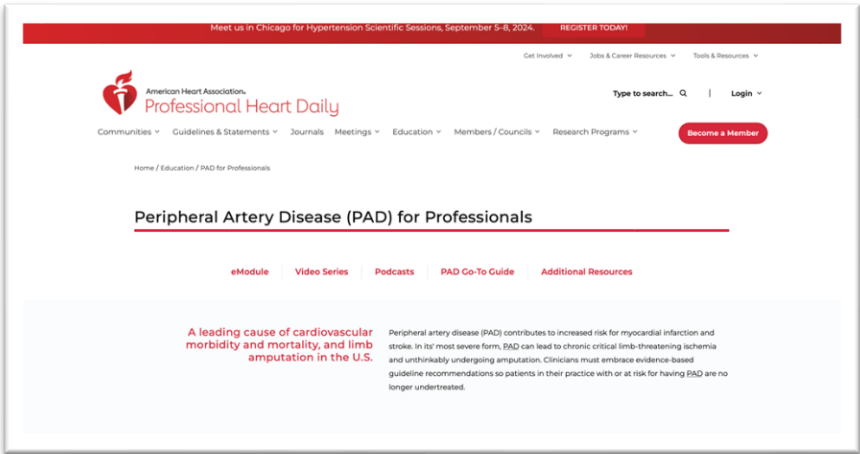
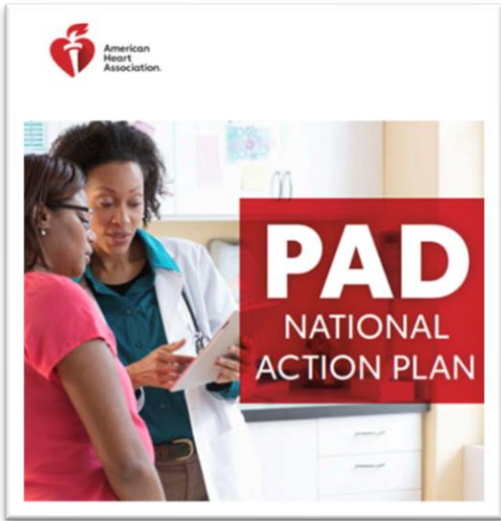
where the needs lie and advocate for your patients and their families. The amputation heat map is one tool of many you can utilize.

Resources for health care professionals

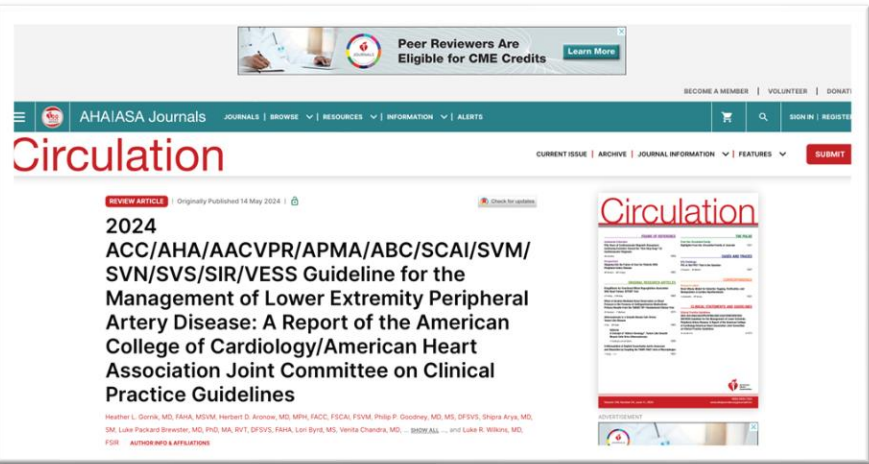
Clinician Go-To Guide



National Action Plan



PAD for Professionals video series, podcasts, PAD Go-To Guide, and additional resources:



2024 Guideline for the Management of LowerExtremity Peripheral Artery Disease

Reaching patients, caregivers, and the public

Patients, caregivers and the public deserve to have increased knowledge and awareness surrounding PAD to help prevent, catch and treat PAD symptoms before they progress. The Heat Map allows you to show the urgency of the amputation epidemic in their backyard.



About peripheral artery disease



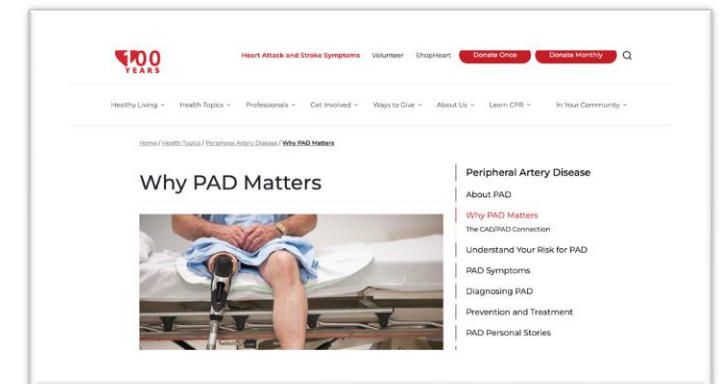
Overview:

What is peripheral artery disease?

Peripheral artery disease, or PAD, is a circulation problem in the leg and causes the narrowing of the peripheral arteries that carry blood away from the heart to other parts of the body. The most common type is lower-extremity PAD, in which blood flow is reduced to the legs and feet.



[What is Peripheral Artery Disease? | American Heart Association](#)



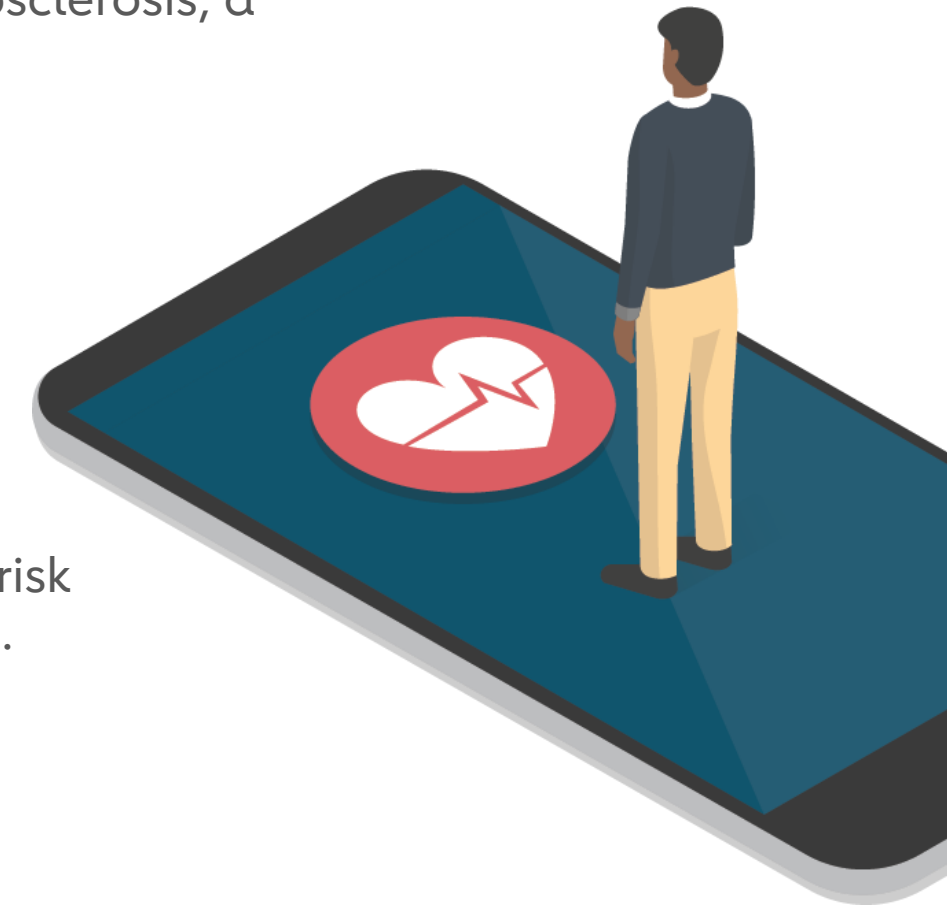
[Why PAD Matters | American Heart Association](#)

What everyone needs to know about PAD



Information on peripheral artery disease (PAD) and amputations:

- ✓ Peripheral artery disease (a circulation problem in the leg) is caused by atherosclerosis, a buildup of plaque in the walls of the peripheral arteries.
- ✓ People who have diabetes and/or smoke have an increased risk.
- ✓ In the United States, PAD affects more than 10-12 million people.
- ✓ An estimated, 46% to 68% of patients with PAD also have coronary artery disease or cerebrovascular disease.
- ✓ The majority of patients impacted by PAD are 65 years and older and in high-risk populations including Black, Hispanic/Latino and southern/rural communities.



What everyone **needs to know about PAD**

Information on peripheral artery disease (PAD) and amputations:

- ✓ Significant racial/ethnic and geographic disparities are associated with elevated incidence and severity of PAD.
- ✓ People with PAD have an increased risk for coronary artery disease, heart attack and stroke, and lower limb tissue injury.
- ✓ Early diagnosis and awareness of PAD is important to managing the disease.
- ✓ Awareness of PAD, its risk factors, and complications is relatively low, which contributes to delayed or underused treatment of PAD.
- ✓ Each year, approximately 150,000 leg amputations are performed in the United States, and most cases occur in people with diabetes.
- ✓ There is significant regional, racial and socioeconomic variation in amputation risk. Specifically, residents of rural areas, African American and American Indian patients and those of low socioeconomic status are at the highest risk of amputation.

What everyone needs to know about PAD

Information on peripheral artery disease (PAD) and amputations:

- ✓ Vascular health specialists are working together to educate the public and policymakers on the importance of PAD awareness, education, diagnosis and management.
- ✓ The PAD Collaborative consists of over 17 organizations working together to increase public awareness and understanding of PAD, prevent complications, address health barriers and improve quality of life for people living with the disease.
- ✓ Professional education programs, research and community-based initiatives can help address PAD and potentially decrease the number of serious complications, such as amputations, that are associated with it. Yet support is needed.
- ✓ The [Lower Extremity Amputations Heat Map](#) illustrates the rates of lower limb amputations. Some areas of the country are impacted more than others, but nationwide efforts are also needed.
- ✓ Unified efforts surrounding clinical guidelines, research, and public awareness on amputation and PAD are imperative.

Support the efforts of health organizations, groups such as the PAD Collaborative, public health partners and researchers *who are working to help address this public health concern.*

Educating individuals with PAD



What individuals with PAD need to know:

- ✓ The most common symptoms of PAD are burning, aching, numbness, fatigue, or discomfort in your leg or hip muscles while walking. The symptoms are caused by your legs not getting the blood flow they need.
- ✓ Limb amputation is a serious complication of peripheral artery disease, or PAD, (a circulation problem in the leg). Increased awareness of PAD may improve early detection and treatment, enabling patients to avoid amputation.
- ✓ A [new map](#) illustrates the number of amputations that occur throughout the U.S. Check out the map and see if you live in a high amputation area.
- ✓ Know your risks and talk to your doctor or care team regularly about questions you may have.
- ✓ Your personal experience of living with PAD can help educate people at high risk of developing PAD.
- ✓ Communicate with your lawmakers on the local, state and federal area. Sharing your story can help make a difference for others affected by PAD and those who are at risk for developing it.

Educating elected officials about PAD



What public officials/lawmakers need to know about PAD:

- ✓ Peripheral artery disease is a circulation problem in the leg that affects more than 10-12 million adults in the United States. The majority of patients are 65 years and older in high-risk populations including Black, Hispanic/Latino and southern/rural communities.
- ✓ Low management of changeable risk factors, delayed recognition of PAD, limited health insurance coverage for many high-risk groups, and inadequate access to advanced PAD care can lead to more amputations, deaths, and medical expenditures.
- ✓ Low household income and low education level have been associated with the development of PAD in U.S. adults.
- ✓ This is a public health problem, and your constituents rely on you to help.
- ✓ Advocacy and education initiatives are needed to decrease complications associated with PAD, including lower limb amputations, which are detrimental to patients and costly for the healthcare delivery system.
- ✓ You can utilize the map to see the amputation rates in your community.

Work with health professionals and organizations to support legislation for affordable prevention, diagnosis and management of PAD; and continue the fight for robust regulation of tobacco products.

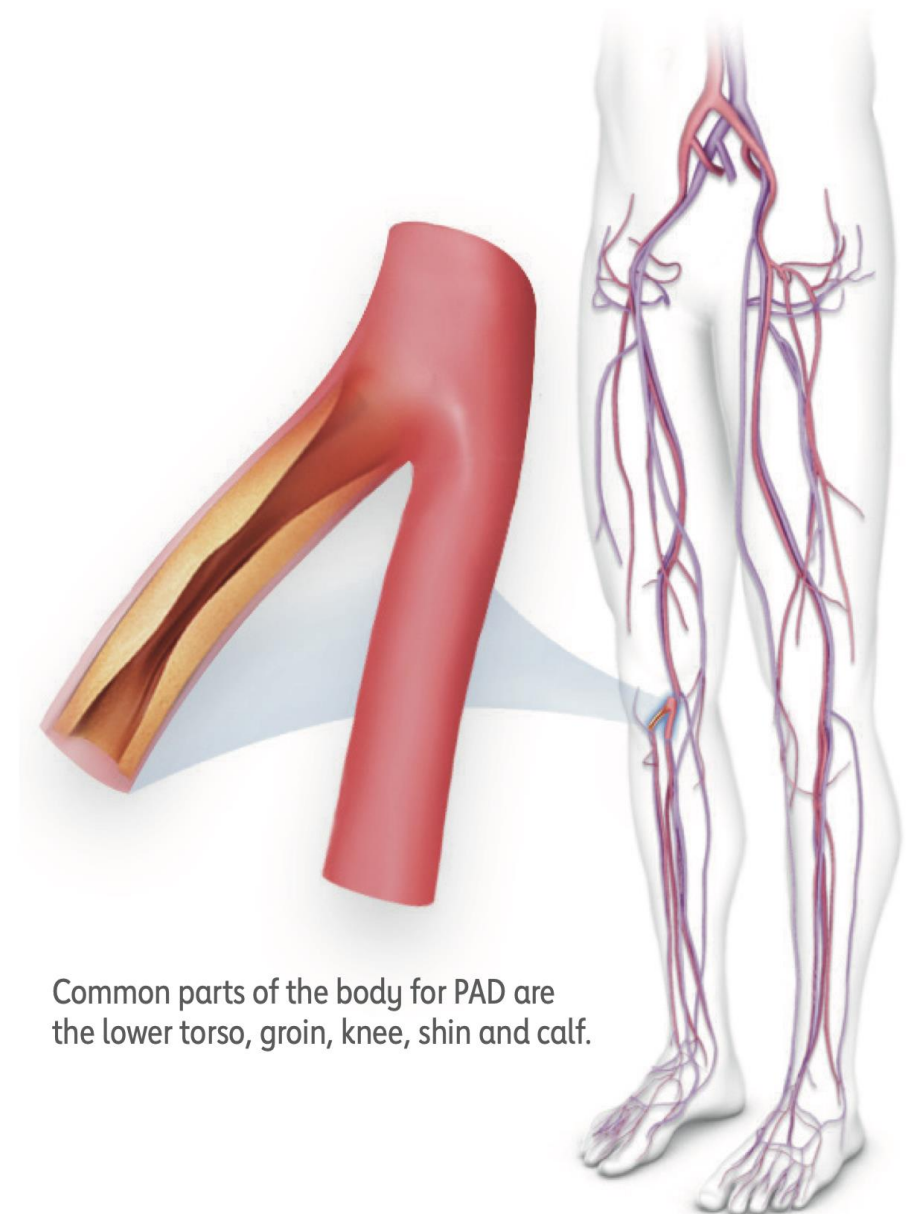
Information for **patients and caregivers**



- Patient and Caregiver Resources:
[PAD Resources | American Heart Association](#)
- PAD Personal Patient Stories:
[PAD Personal Stories | American Heart Association](#)
- Questions to Ask Your Doctor:
[PAD Questions to Ask Your Doctor | American Heart Association](#)

The American Heart Association's Support Network community is a program and service intended to provide emotional and social support to heart and stroke patients and their caregivers in a safe environment through peer-to-peer connections online.

Learn more and join the Support Network: [American Heart Association Support Network](#)



Peripheral artery disease (PAD) community-based ABI screening information

By utilizing the [Heat Map](#), you will see areas in the region, state and local community where hosting a community-based ankle-brachial index (ABI) screening may be most impactful. Suggestions on what is needed to conduct a community-based screening, and examples of community-based screening locations are provided.

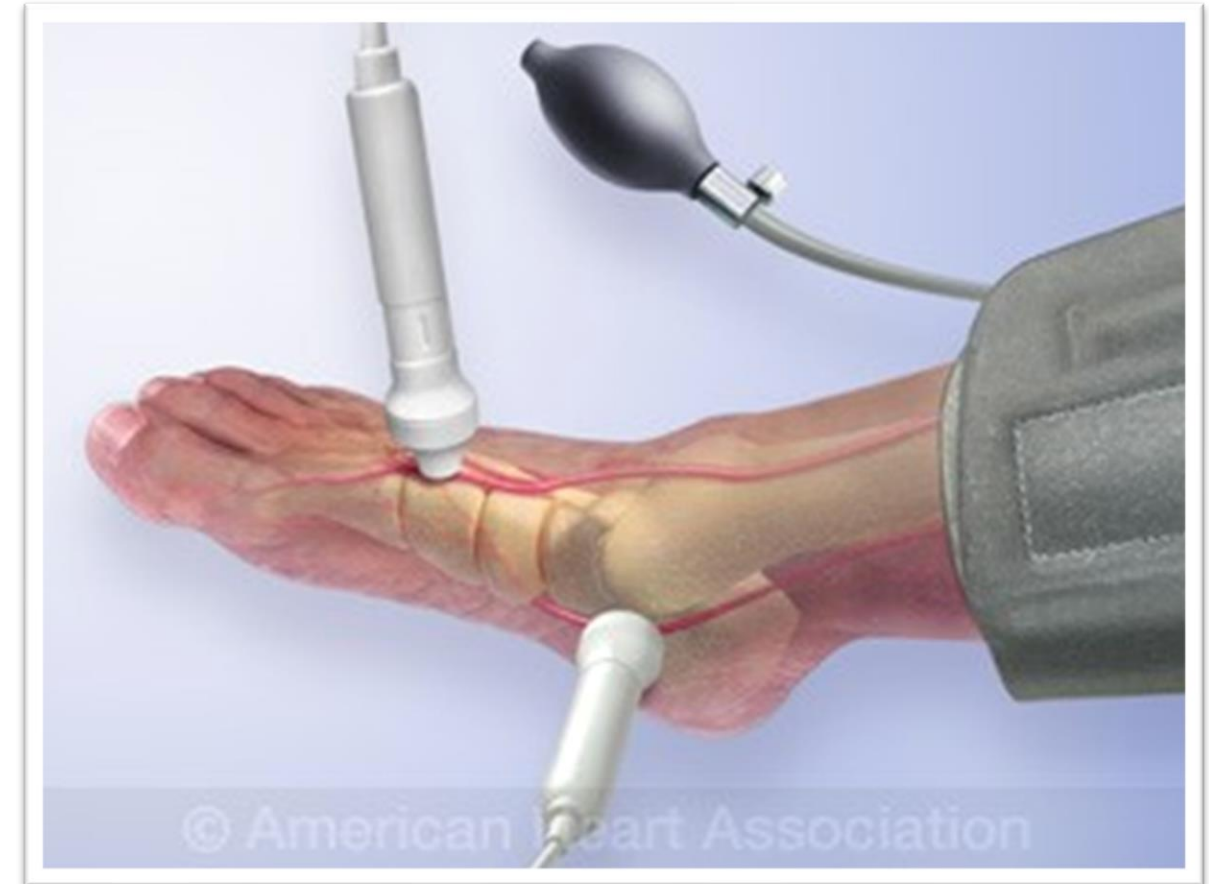


Community-based **ABI screening**

African American and American Indian populations are at highest risk for PAD and Black adults are 2x more likely to have PAD than non-Hispanic and white adults. States with the highest rates of lower limb amputation are Mississippi, D.C., Louisiana, South Carolina and Oklahoma. The impact of geography, socioeconomic status, race, and other social determinants of health on PAD-related outcomes are interrelated and apply to rural as well as urban areas. Setting up an ABI community screening could allow for earlier diagnosis of PAD and educate at-risk communities about the signs and symptoms of PAD.

Ankle-brachial index, or ABI: This painless exam compares the blood pressure in your lower legs to the blood pressure in your arms. It takes only a few minutes and can be performed by your health care professional as part of a routine exam.

For more information visit: [How is PAD Diagnosed? | American Heart Association](#)



Community-based **ABI screening**



To set up a community- based screening:

- Select a location to conduct the screening (for location examples see page 23).
- Collaborate with a health care professional to conduct the screening.
- Utilize either automated or manual equipment (work with your health care professional).
- Utilize a patient-safe table (example - folding massage table).
- Utilize a chair for patients to remove shoes and socks.
- Utilize a step stool for patients to get on and off table.
- Bring a privacy screen.
- Provide infection control supplies (hand sanitizer, wipes, gloves).
- Recommend release form, pre and post survey, video.
- The screening itself should only take 5 minutes, but entire process may be 20 minutes per person.
- Provide information on the nearest health care professionals and hospitals for participants to seek care in the event of an abnormal result.

Provide resources:

- [Are you at risk for PAD? \(heart.org\)](https://www.heart.org/healthlibrary/are-you-at-risk-for-pad)
- [¿Está en riesgo de padecer EAP? \(heart.org\)](https://www.heart.org/healthlibrary/esta-en-riesgo-de-padecer-eap)
- [What Is Peripheral Artery Disease? \(heart.org\)](https://www.heart.org/healthlibrary/what-is-peripheral-artery-disease)
- [¿Qué es la enfermedad arterial periférica \(PAD\)? \(heart.org\)](https://www.heart.org/healthlibrary/que-es-la-enfermedad-arterial-periferica)

Community-based **ABI screening examples**

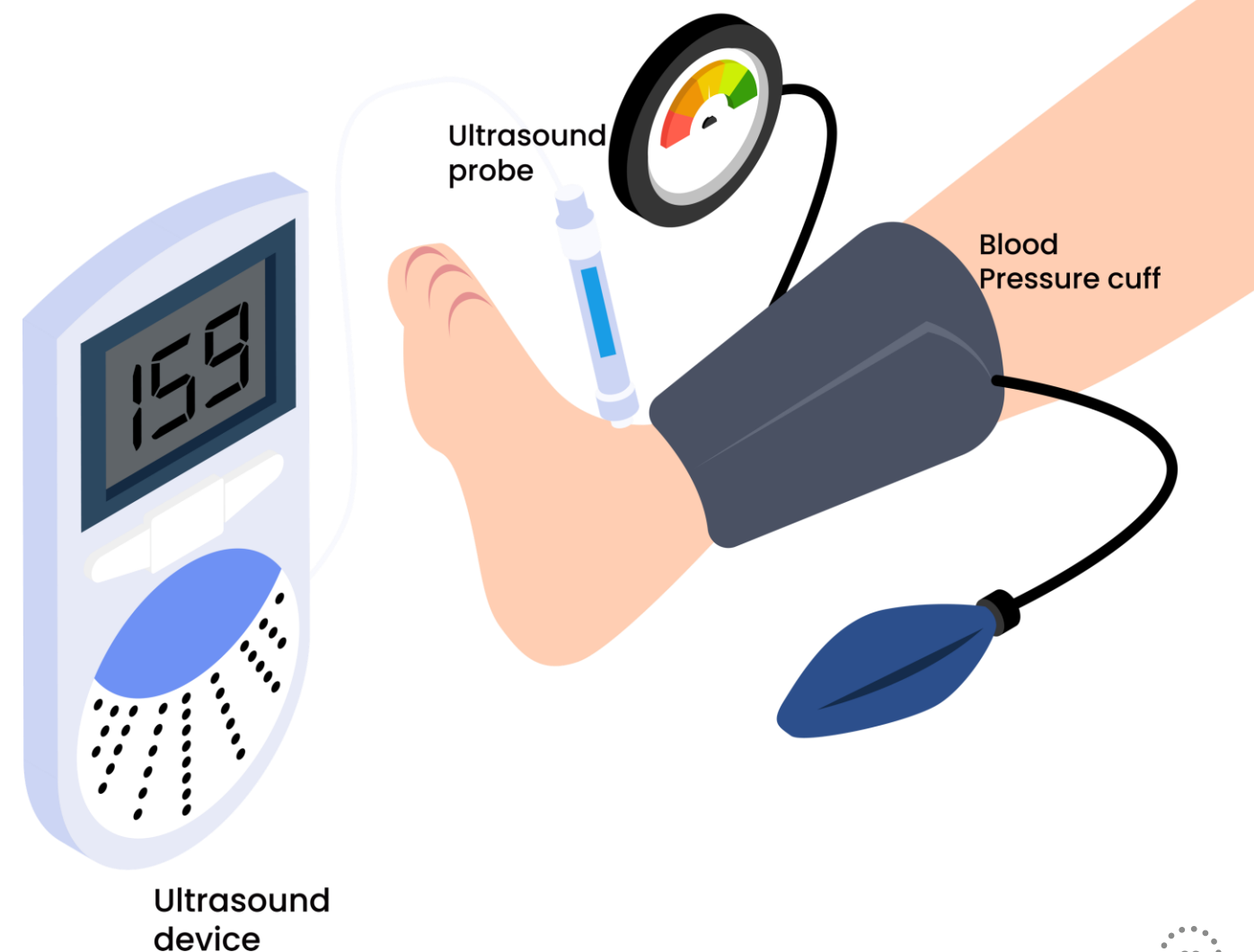
Where and how these screenings can be held:

- YMCA
- Church/Place of worship
- Hotel
- Barbershop
- Library
- Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
- Senior center
- Community center
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)

Collaborate with a health care professional*. For example: primary care, internal medicine, podiatry, wound care, cardiology, vascular

**When finding a health care professional, if possible, have a provider from the community location who can easily build trust with participants*

Ankle-brachial pressure Index (ABPI)
detecting for peripheral arterial disease (PAD)



Community-based **ABI screening considerations**

- Create a participant release form for confirmation that individuals want to participate.
- Create a questionnaire/assessment before completing screening (see below for some example questions)
 - Why are you here today?
 - How far can you walk?
 - Does your walking ability interfere with daily life?
 - Do you have pain in your legs when you walk?
 - Risk factors- Do you smoke? Do you have high blood pressure?
- Show a video about PAD and screening to assist with literacy: [PAD Video](#).
- Provide information about normal, mild, moderate and severe results and recommendations.
- Provide step-by-step guide on ABI screening.
- Provide document where right ABI and left ABI numbers are written down and individuals can take it to their PCP.
- Utilize [PAD Screening Guide for Community-Based Organizations](#) to understand what PAD is and why early screening is important, spread awareness and educate the community about PAD and learn how to conduct a PAD screening event in the community.

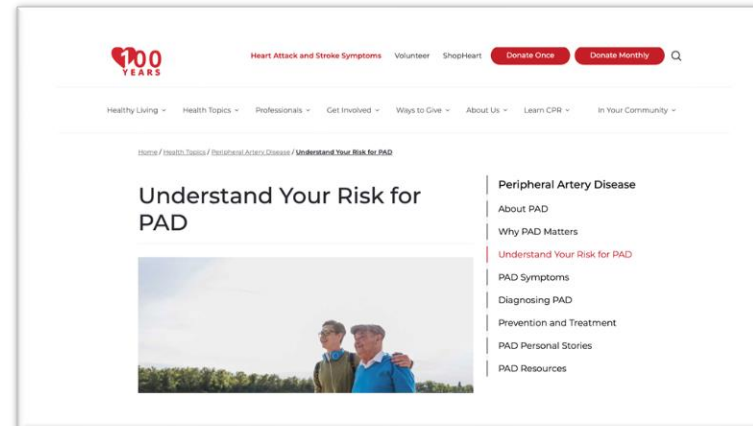
ABI screening resources



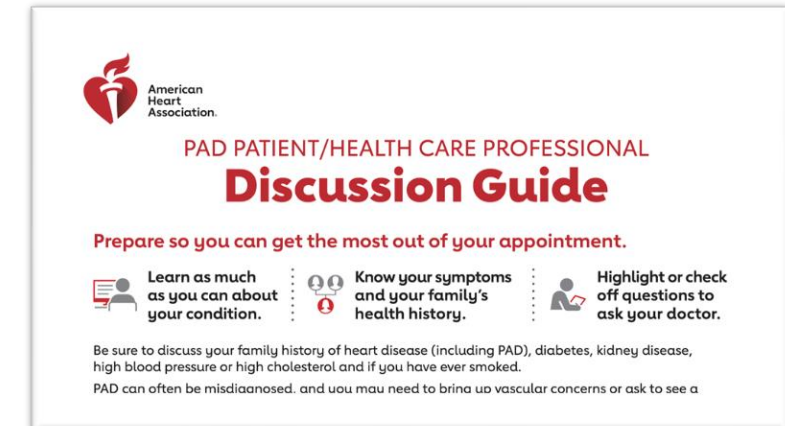
Printable resources for your community screening:



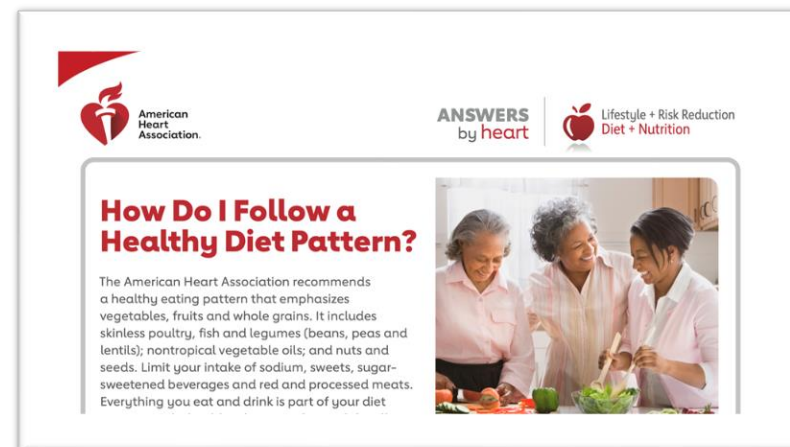
[Are you at risk for PAD? \(heart.org\)](#)



[Understand Your Risk for PAD | American Heart Association](#)



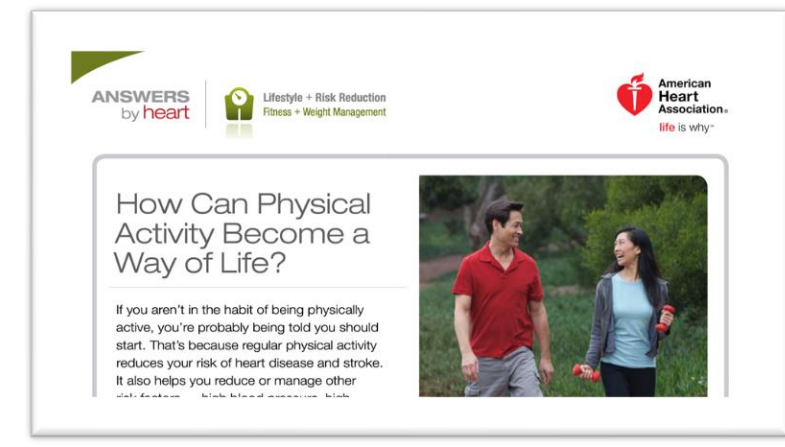
[PAD Discussion Guide \(heart.org\)](#)



[How Do I Follow a Healthy Diet Pattern? \(heart.org\)](#)



[How Can I Quit Smoking? \(heart.org\)](#)



[How Can Physical Activity Become a Way of Life \(heart.org\)](#)

Marketing for organizations to help drive change

Following are examples of how your organization can leverage the resources provided and elevate the voice and impact of the [Heat Map](#).



Activate Social media channels



We encourage you to use the Heat Map to guide you in your targeted marketing campaigns, focusing on those areas that have high prevalence of amputation:

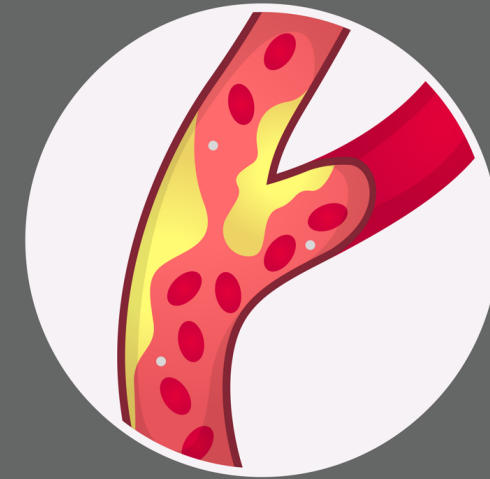
- **Share** provided content across your social media platforms and encourage reposts and retweets (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter)).
- **Follow** the American Heart Association social media handles and engage (like, comment, repost/retweet campaign messages).
- **AHA:** Facebook (@AmericanHeart), X (formerly Twitter)(@American_Heart), Instagram (@American_Heart), + LinkedIn (American Heart Association)

Leveraging **e-newsletters**

Integrate messaging and calls-to-action into your e-mail or print newsletters, magazines, etc.

Build a Messaging Calendar with Additional Touchpoints to Drive the Conversation

- September- PAD Awareness Month
- November- Caregiver Month
- February – American Heart Month



NATIONAL

**PERIPHERAL
ARTERY
DISEASE
AWARENESS
MONTH**

E-newsletter and email templates

Language non-vascular health professionals need to know:

- Do you regularly screen your patients for peripheral artery disease (PAD) and discuss the risks with patients who smoke, have high blood pressure and/or diabetes? Amputation is a serious complication that, although rare, can occur with PAD. People living in some parts of the U.S. and members of certain socioeconomic groups are more heavily impacted by PAD. To learn more and know see your region ranks in terms of lower limb amputation rates, check out the [PAD Collaborative website](#) and a new [interactive heat map](#).
- Familiarize yourself with the risks your patients face for developing peripheral artery disease (PAD), especially if they smoke and/or have diabetes. Information on screening, dangers of potential amputation, and other PAD resources are available on the [PAD Collaborative website](#) and via an [interactive amputation heat map](#).

E-newsletter and email templates



Language the public needs to know:

- If you smoke, or have diabetes or high blood pressure, you have an increased risk of developing peripheral artery disease (PAD), a condition caused by poor blood flow in the legs and feet. A serious complication of PAD is amputation of the feet, toes or legs, and in some regions of the U.S. people are at greater risk, as shown in a new [interactive amputation heat map](#). Ask your health care professional if you need to be screened for PAD, especially if you are considered at risk or if you experience burning, aching, numbness or fatigue in your leg or hip muscles while walking.
- Amputation of the toes, feet or legs is a serious complication of peripheral artery disease (PAD), a condition caused by poor blood flow in the legs and feet. A [new interactive amputation map](#) highlights that there is a significant difference in the risk of lower limb amputations throughout the U.S. based on where people live and their race or socioeconomic status. Ask your health care professional if you need to be screened for PAD, especially if you experience burning, aching, numbness or fatigue in your leg or hip muscles while walking.
- Peripheral artery disease (PAD) occurs due to poor blood flow in the legs and feet, and one serious complication is amputation. A [new interactive amputation map](#) highlights the significant geographic, socioeconomic and racial differences in the risk of lower limb amputations throughout the U.S. If you have risk factors or symptoms, it's important to get checked.

Social media templates

For health care professionals:

For downloadable graphics [click here](#)

Look for these signs of peripheral artery disease in your patients. PAD can have serious complications, including amputation and a higher risk of heart attack and stroke, if it's not caught early.

Ask your patients about unexplained leg pain or wounds that heal slowly. Early detection of peripheral artery disease can lower the risk of complications, including amputation, but PAD is often undiagnosed.

Peripheral artery disease can lead to amputation. Ask patients about leg pain and slow-healing wounds to detect PAD early.



Symptoms of PAD



Leg or foot wounds that are slow to heal



Unexplained leg pain or cramping, especially during exercise or walking



Skin problems or discoloration on your legs and feet, poor nail growth

<https://professional.heart.org/en/education/pad-for-professionals>



Lower extremity PAD is a common and potentially deadly disease affecting 10-12M Americans over 40.

<https://professional.heart.org/en/education/pad-for-professionals>



150,000.
That's how many **leg amputations** are performed in the US.

<https://professional.heart.org/en/education/pad-for-professionals>

Social media templates

For health care professionals:

For downloadable graphics [click here](https://professional.heart.org/en/education/pad-for-professionals)



Peripheral artery disease raises the risk of heart attack, stroke and amputation, but it often goes undiagnosed. If your patient has these risk factors, ask them about unexplained leg pain or wounds that heal slowly, signs of an artery blockage.

Risk Factors for PAD

The graphic lists six risk factors for PAD, each with a red circular icon: a cigarette with a slash (smoking), a DNA helix (family history), a hand with a pulse line (diabetes), a heart with a pulse line (high blood pressure), a circular arrow (age), and a drop with an upward arrow (cholesterol).

- A history of smoking
- A family history of PAD
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Age >65 years
- High cholesterol

<https://professional.heart.org/en/education/pad-for-professionals>

Leg pain plus a history of smoking could mean peripheral artery disease. The resting ankle brachial index is a good indicator. It compares the systolic blood pressure in the lower leg with the systolic BP in the arms. Use it to check for PAD in your at-risk patients.

The Ankle Brachial Index (ABI) Test

Normal	1.00-1.40
Borderline	0.91-0.99
Abnormal	Less than or equal to 0.90 and greater than 1.40

<https://professional.heart.org/en/education/pad-for-professionals>

Social media templates

For individuals with PAD:

For downloadable graphics [click here](#)

Pain while walking is a common symptom of peripheral artery disease, or PAD, a narrowing of the arteries leading away from the heart. As plaque builds in the arteries, the muscles get less oxygen, causing leg pain. Talk to your doctor about any pain in the legs, hips, thighs or butt and take off your socks so your doctor can check for other signs of PAD.

Pain while walking is a common symptom of peripheral artery disease, or PAD, a narrowing of the arteries leading away from the heart. As plaque builds in the arteries, the muscles get less oxygen, causing leg pain. Talk to your doctor about any pain in the legs, hips, thighs or butt and take off your socks so your doctor can check for other signs of PAD.

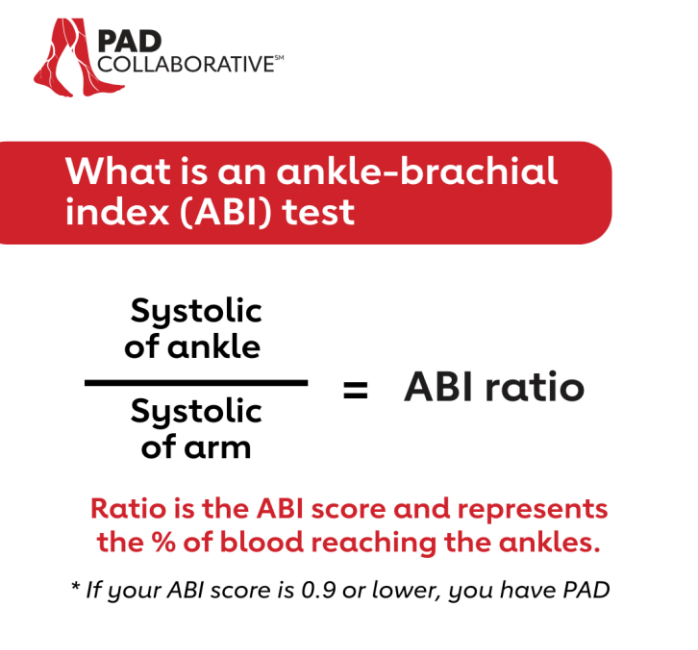
An ankle brachial index is a painless test that can help you know if you have peripheral artery disease, or PAD. If you have pain in your legs, hips, thighs or butt, ask your doctor about an ABI test. Early detection can help prevent serious complications, including amputation.



heart.org/PAD



heart.org/PAD



heart.org/PAD

Social media templates

For individuals with PAD:

For downloadable graphics [click here](#)

Peripheral artery disease, or PAD, is a narrowing of the peripheral arteries that carry blood away from the heart to other parts of the body, such as the legs and feet. Early detection can help prevent serious complications from PAD – including heart attack, stroke, gangrene and amputation – but many people mistake the symptoms for something else, and it is often undiagnosed. If you have cramping, fatigue, aching, pain or discomfort in the leg or hip muscles while walking or climbing stairs, talk to your doctor about PAD.

Rural, African American and American Indian populations are at highest risk for PAD. Work with your community leaders to help raise more awareness of this serious condition.



These states have the highest rates of lower limb amputations.

Amputations may be a complication of PAD



Mississippi, DC, Louisiana, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Maryland, Arkansas, Delaware, Alabama, and Virginia

heart.org/PAD



Arthritis vs PAD

Arthritis

- Pain in joints
- Pain lingers
- May cause joint swelling
- Joints may be warm to the touch

PAD

- Pain in muscles
- Pain starts slowly when active, goes away with rest
- Pale or bluish skin
- No leg hair
- Slow toenail growth

Common symptoms but not everyone presents all symptoms.

heart.org/PAD



Amputation can be a consequence of peripheral artery disease, or PAD, because it reduces blood flow to an area of the body, most commonly the legs or feet. Talk to a doctor about leg pain so you can be treated early.



If you have pain and discomfort in your feet, legs, thighs or butt, that may be a sign of a serious health problem.



heart.org/PAD

PAD heat map press release template



For downloadable content [click here](#)

Expanded Heat Map Highlights PAD-Related Amputations Nationwide

Updated tool reveals rates of lower limb amputation for those with PAD and highlights growing PAD gaps across the U.S.

[City, State, Date] — The PAD Collaborative, a coalition of 17 organizations led by the American Heart Association, has released an enhanced version of its [interactive heat map](#) tracking lower limb amputations linked to [peripheral artery disease](#) (PAD) across the United States. The updated tool offers more detailed geographic data and integrates post-pandemic datasets to better identify high-risk areas, guide targeted interventions and support advocacy for improved care.

PAD affects [10 to 12 million](#) Americans. Risk factors include diabetes, smoking and high blood pressure. If untreated, PAD can lead to critical limb ischemia and amputation. Yet nearly 70% of Americans remain unaware of their risk, and only one in three diagnosed patients receives guideline-based care.

Using Medicare and U.S. Census Bureau data through 2023, the map shows five-year amputation rates per 1,000 PAD patients by county and congressional district. Filters allow users to explore by age, race and gender, revealing where resources and interventions are most urgently needed.

Obstacles in rural and low-income communities limit access to screenings and follow-up care, which can contribute to worse outcomes. The PAD Collaborative addresses these challenges through the [PAD National Action Plan](#), to facilitate changes aimed at reducing the number of people facing life-altering lower limb amputations.

[Include quote from head of individual organization here]

[Individual organization] is a member of the PAD Collaborative, a group of 17 collaborating organizations focused on improved awareness, education, research, treatment and advocacy surrounding PAD.

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About the PAD Collaborative

The PAD Collaborative, convened by the American Heart Association, unites organizations and experts committed to advancing the PAD National Action Plan to increase public awareness and understanding of PAD, prevent complications, address health barriers and improve quality of life for people living with the disease. The long-term success of the PAD National Action Plan depends on the collaboration and coordination of many groups and health care champions committed to conquering this disease. More than 17 organizations and hundreds of volunteers have already raised their hands to work together to advance the National Action Plan. For more information or to join the PAD Collaborative as an organization or individual, visit: heart.org/PADCollaborative

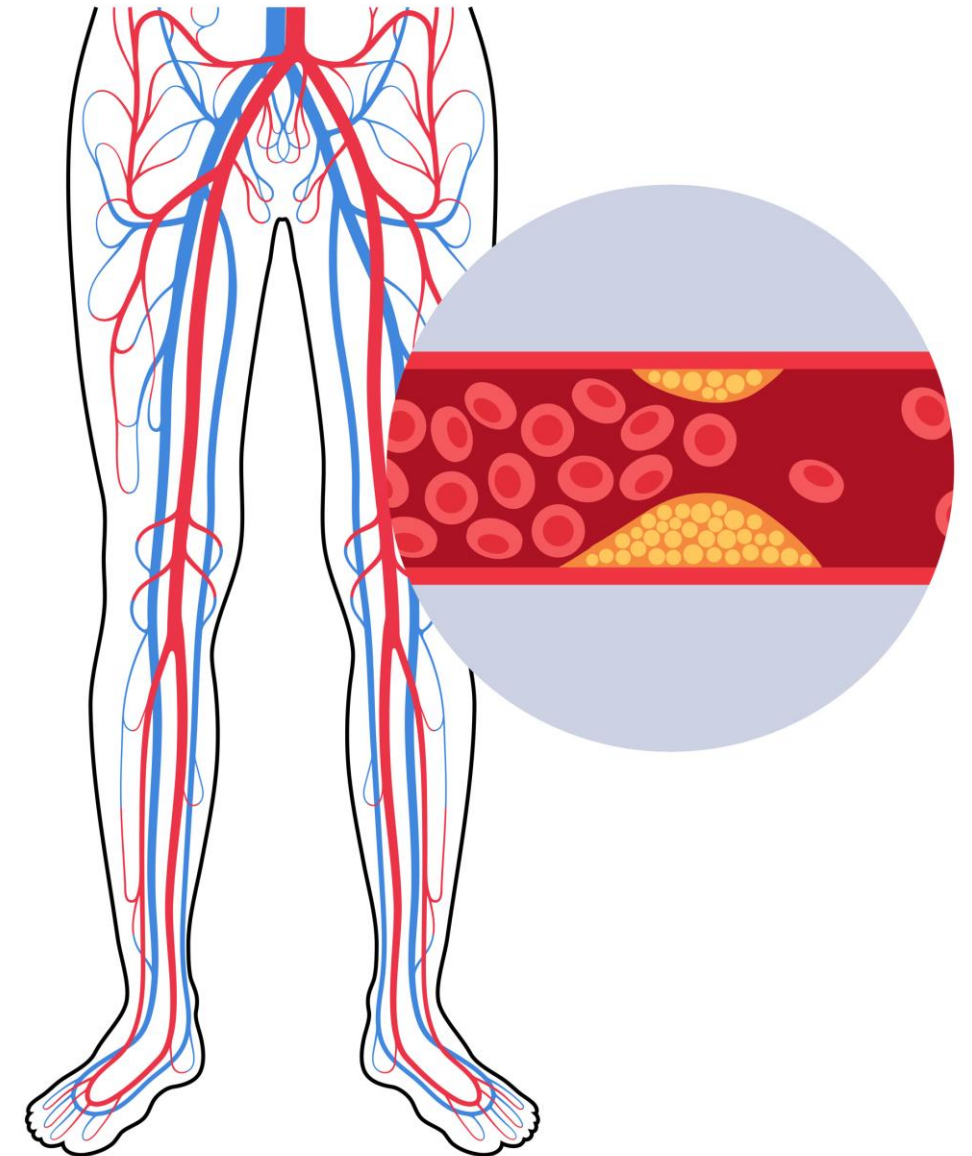
Get involved

PAD Collaborative and National Action Plan (NAP)

The PAD Collaborative is open to anyone interested in PAD, from physicians, researchers and advocacy organizations to patients and families impacted by PAD.

To learn more and join the PAD Collaborative: [PAD Collaborative - Professional Heart Daily | American Heart Association](#)

To read about the National Action Plan: [Peripheral Artery Disease National Action Plan | American Heart Association](#)



**Additional
resources**

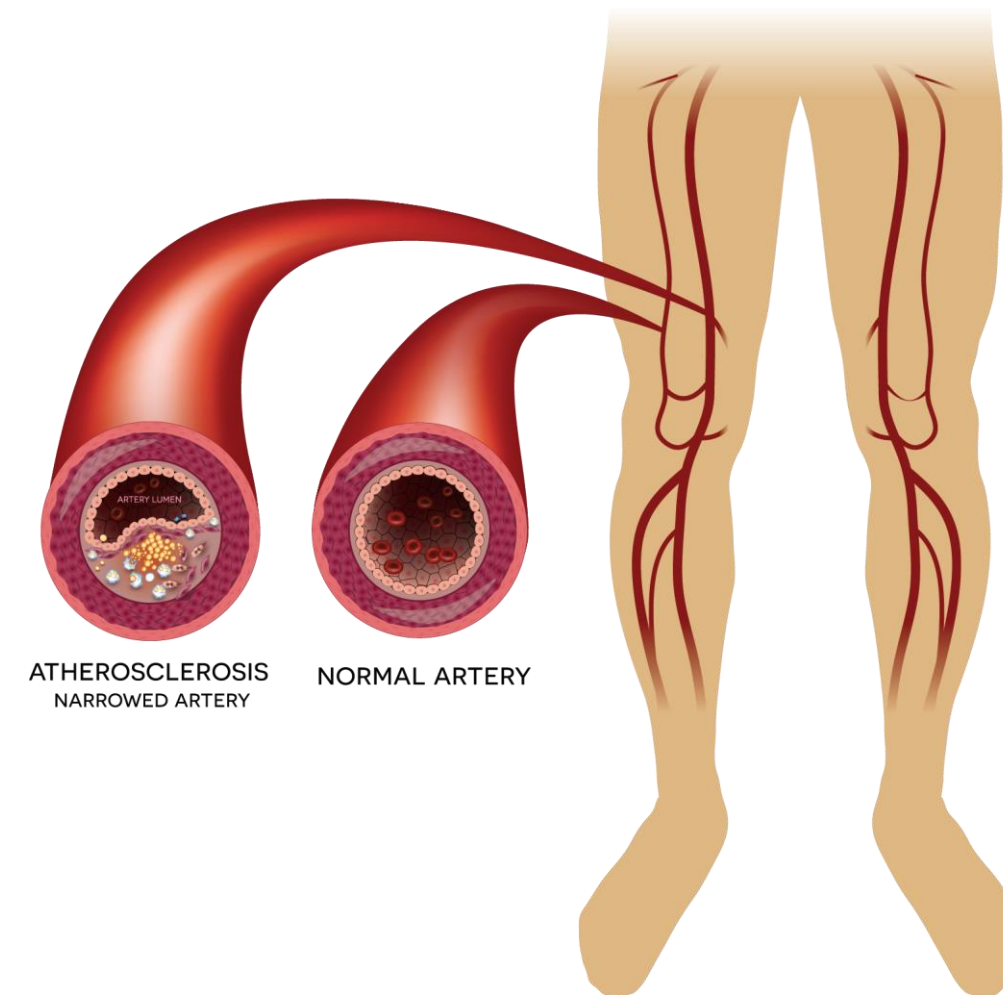


PAD phrase testing introduction



Objectives

- The goal is to identify the terminology for peripheral artery disease that would resonate with at-risk adults who have not heard of the condition.
- Assess the term “peripheral artery disease (PAD)” in terms of awareness, understanding, and relevance.
- Test alternative phrases to identify the term that is most effective (understanding, relevance, action).



PAD phrase testing introduction



Methodology

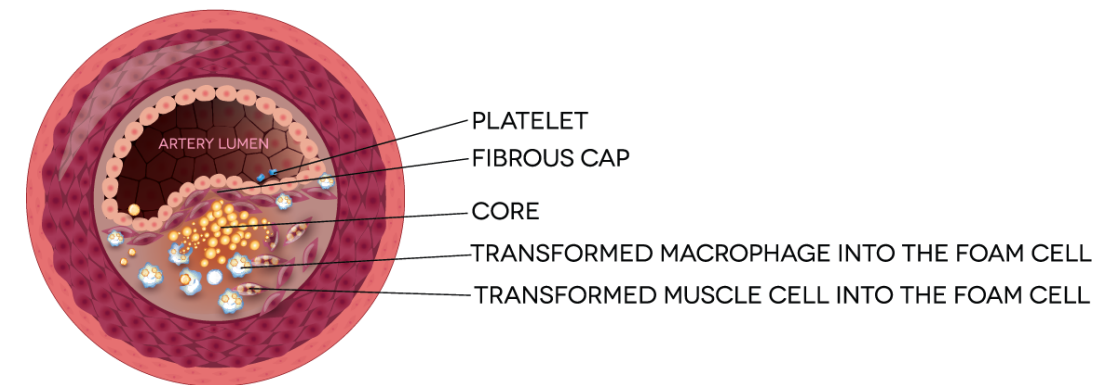
An online survey was programmed in Qualtrics by the AHA Customer and Marketing Research team.

- Qualtrics recruited survey respondents through a market research panel of adult who have signed up to participate in surveys.
- The survey was open from Oct. 25-30, 2023.
- A total of 626 respondents completed the survey. All qualified as being at risk for PAD by reporting any of the following conditions:
 - Current cigarette, cigarillo, cigar, or tobacco pipe smokers
 - Diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes

Sample

The following demographic groups, who are at higher risk for PAD, were oversampled:

- Black and Hispanic Americans
- Veterans
- Live in the Southeast region of the U.S.

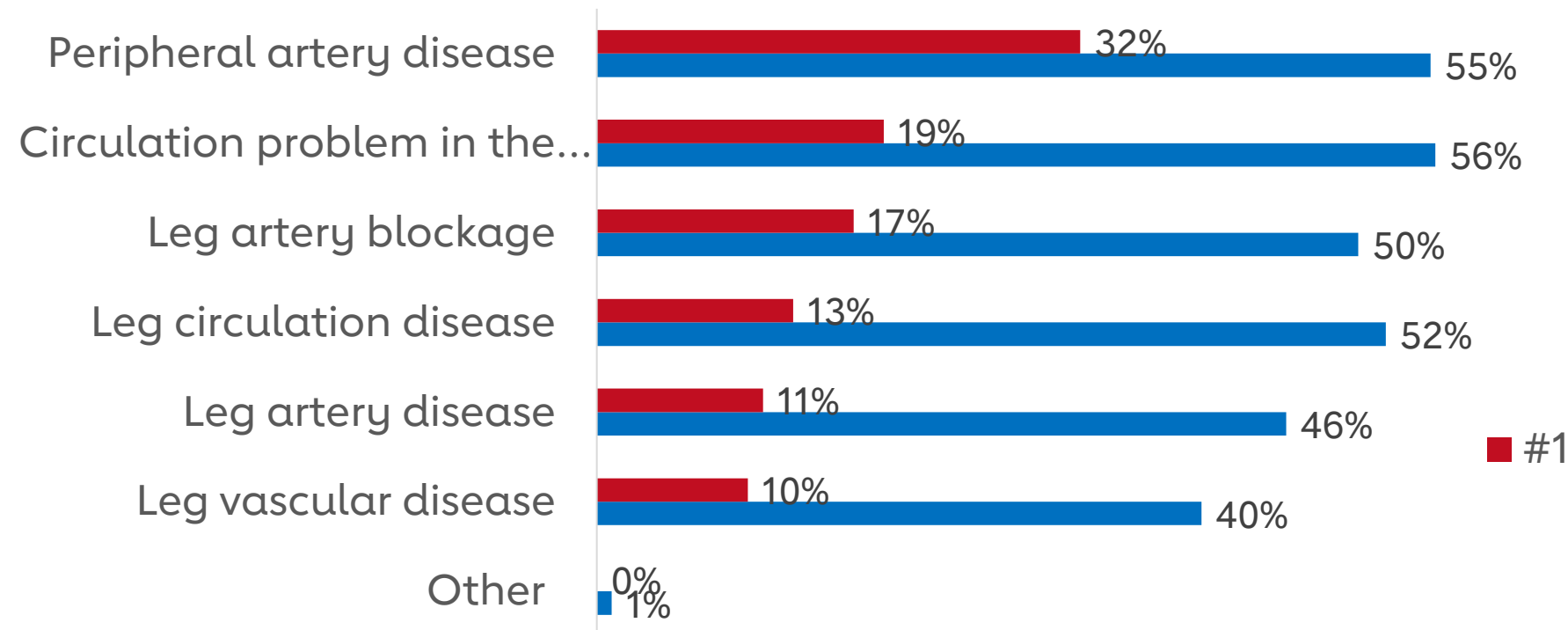


Best Descriptor



“Peripheral Artery Disease” was ranked No. 1 as the best descriptor by 32% of respondents.

Several additional phrases were ranked in the top 3 by half or more respondents: “Circulation problem in the leg,” “leg circulation disease” and “leg artery blockage.”



Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD) ranked #1 among:
White (34%), Black (24%), Hispanic (31%), Veteran (39%), Southeast (29%), Female (32%), Male (31%), 55+ (34%), <55 (30%)

Red= The percentage of respondents that chose the descriptor as number 1.

Blue= The percentage of respondents that rated the descriptor in the top 3.

“Last question! Which of the following phrases best describes this condition?
Please rank the following phrases in terms of how well they describe this condition, with 1= the best descriptor, 2=second best descriptor, and so on. Use your finger or mouse to reorder the phrases.”

Key takeaways: **phrase evaluation**



Conveys urgency: "Circulation problem in the leg" or "leg artery blockage" were most likely to motivate respondents to seek help from their health care professional urgently, each selected by more than one-quarter of respondents (29% and 28%, respectively). "Peripheral artery disease" was selected by 15% of respondents.

- "Circulation problem in the leg" was most motivating to Black, Male, <55, Veteran, Southeast respondents.



Easiest to understand: "Circulation problem in the leg" was considered **easiest to understand** based on reading a definition, selected by one-third of respondents (33%); it was preferred across most demographic groups. "Peripheral artery disease" was selected by 23% of respondents.



Best descriptor: "Peripheral artery disease" was ranked No. 1 as the **best descriptor** by 32% of respondents; it was No. 1 across most demographic groups. Several additional phrases were ranked in the top 3 by 50%+ respondents: "Circulation problem in the leg," "leg circulation disease" and "leg artery blockage."